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MEMOIR

OF

THE REVEREND JAMES MATHER,

FORMERLY OF SHEFFIELD, AND LATE OF UPPER CLAPTON.

THE churches of Christ should ever be ready to adopt the prayer and act in the spirit of Moses, when he cried, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." To us, indeed, it seems desirable, that gifted and godly youths should be devoted to the ministry of the gospel from their earliest years, and like Samuel or Timothy, like Watts or Doddridge, bring to the service of the sanctuary the consecrated learning of many years.

But when, on the other hand, we see the grace of God arresting the mind and renewing the heart of a man of great natural talents, which had been long perverted, as was the case with John Bunyan and Robert Bolton, and find him constrained to speak of the power of that gospel which has snatched him from ruin, it is the duty of the churches to aid such in preparatory studies, who, though deficient in the polish of education, may become mighty in the Scriptures, and bring many sinners to God. Such was the happy change effected and the judicious course pursued in reference to the subject of the present Memoir.

MR. JAMES MATHER was born at Leigh, in Lancashire, in the year 1773, and was the youngest of seven children. His father dying when he was only two years old, the care, support, and education of him and her other children devolved entirely upon his widowed mother; and as her circumstances were but limited, he was, at a very early age, put to the loom, and trained to the occupation of a muslin weaver. His youth was spent in folly and sinful ignorance, without the knowledge or fear of God.

When he was about sixteen, his mother died, and he removed to Warrington. From this time, till he was about twenty-six years of age, he was the occasional subject of deep convictions of sin, and

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felt very uneasy about his soul; but he quieted his conscience with the idea that it was vain for him, as he then was, to think of attending to religion, for he should never be any better till he was settled in life.

At length he entered upon a married life, which failed, however, to produce the moral change he anticipated. Owing to his natural talents, his great strength, and his firm decision and boldness of character, he was the life of his companions, and the ringleader and champion in all games of pleasure, scenes of amusement, and feats of emulation in the neighbourhood. But all this time he knew not God.

The manner in which he was brought to the knowledge of the truth, shows the beneficial influence which workmen and persons in inferior situations in life may sometimes exert over their masters and other persons in superior stations to themselves. Mr. Mather, who had now become a master manufacturer, employed under him a number of journeymen, among whom there was one that was decidedly pious. This man often introduced the subject of religion to his master, and urged him very much to go and hear some of the ministers, of whom he spoke most highly. At length Mr. M. was persuaded to comply with his request, and he went one Sabbath morning to Duke's Alley Chapel, Bolton, in the expectation of hearing Mr. Maurice, who was then the minister, but who soon after removed to undertake the pastoral charge of the Congregational church in Fetter Lane, London. After he had been some short time in the place, however, a person ascended the pulpit who was known to him as a Methodist. Now Mr. Mather had, at that time, such a horror of Methodists, that his first feeling was to get up and walk out of the chapel, but shame kept him in his seat. The sermon seems to have produced no impression on his mind, but at the conclusion of his discourse the preacher announced that Mr. Redmayne, of Horwich, would preach in the evening. This gentleman was well known, by report, to Mr. M., and he was highly esteemed by him; he therefore determined to make up for the disappointment of the morning, by going to hear him. He did so, and the Lord then met with him. The word fastened on his heart and conscience, and from that moment he never rested until he found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As soon, however, as he obtained rest to his soul he did not confer with flesh and blood as to what he should do, but at once proposed himself as a member of the church, amongst whom he had received the salvation of his soul. His conversion was so remarkable, and the transition from darkness to light, and from sin to holiness, in him was so manifest, that he became "a man wondered at." It was a matter of the greatest surprise and ridicule that he should become a disciple of Jesus Christ; but he held fast his integrity, and greatly adorned his profession. He was not only admitted a member of the church, but such was the standing which he soon gained among his brethren, that within six months they unanimously elected him to the office of deacon. At first he refused to accept it; but when, after allowing the choice to stand over for a month, and engaging to make it a matter of special prayer for direction, and the office being still

pressed upon him, he consented to accept it, and entered on the duties of it with his characteristic ardour and devotedness.

Soon after his call to the deacon's office, he was invited to preach the gospel. This occurred in a very remarkable manner. He had a high idea of the honour and responsibility belonging to the christian ministry, and, in consequence, he trembled at the thought of entering upon it. Besides, he believed that no one ought to thrust himself into the office, or to undertake its duties, but such as were called of God, and he looked upon the church, in all ordinary cases, as the medium through which that call was given. It happened rather singularly one Sabbath evening, at the conclusion of the services of the sanctuary, that Mr. Mather and a fellow deacon called upon a gentleman of the name of Hart, who was a very useful member of the church as a lay preacher, and at that time regularly supplied a number of places in the neighbourhood of the town. Upon seeing Mr. M. he told him that he was the very person he wanted, and then proposed that he should supply one of his stations on the Sabbath evening following. Mr. M. refused, and assigned his reasons. His friend sought to induce him, but all in vain, until he was asked, if the church should be called together, and they should say that it was his duty to go, would he then comply? He readily answered, he would. The members of the church were specially requested to stay after the lecture on the Wednesday evening: the subject was laid before them, and they unanimously agreed that, in the circumstances, it was the duty of their deacon to preach the gospel, and he was thereby called to the work.

And now, having entered on it, he was soon almost constantly employed, not only in the villages, but in the pulpits of the neighbouring ministers; and a very acceptable supply he became. Indeed, his talents and qualifications for usefulness were felt to be of such an order as to justify the church and other friends to apply for his admission into an institution then about to be formed at Manchester, for the training of married men for the ministry of the gospel. That application was successful, and he was one of the first students admitted into that humble, but very useful school of the prophets, under the paternal care of the Rev. William Roby.

The course of education was two years. At the end, however, of the first twelve months, notwithstanding the progress which he had made in his studies, and his increased interest in and attachment and devotedness to the work, he imagined that it was his duty to leave the institution, and again return to his worldly calling. This was in consequence of the great change which had taken place in his circumstances. When he first thought of devoting himself entirely to the ministry, although he had a wife and four children, his prospects of their maintenance and comfortable support were bright and cheering. He had, by industry, acquired some little property; his trade at that time was good, and he had made arrangements for its being carried on without his personal superintendence; in addition to which, the funds of the institution supplied a certain sum weekly to each student towards the maintenance of himself and

family. Owing, however, to circumstances over which he had no controul, and which could not have been foreseen, he lost all the property he had acquired, and a change in the state of trade plunged him and his family into difficulties, and threatened great distress. Upon mentioning the matter, however, to his tutor, the Rev. W. Roby, he introduced his case to the notice of the church, and arrangements were immediately made to supply the means for the continuance and completion of his studies.

Upon leaving the institution, providence directed his footsteps to New Windsor, in the neighbourhood of Manchester, where, for more than three years, he laboured with much acceptance and great success, among an affectionate and devoted people, when he received an invitation to Howard Street Chapel, Sheffield, which he, at length, thought it his duty to accept. The sphere of labour there was much larger than at Windsor; the prospect of support for his still increasing family was better; but what principally led to this decision was the hope of being able to rescue an important interest from the evils of Antinomianism.

The attempt was difficult and daring: but, strengthened by the counsels and urgent recommendations of his former tutor and prudent adviser, and directed and supported by God, he entered on the difficulties and duties of his new station. It was not long before he needed all the strength, the wisdom, and support which his Divine Master only could supply. At the time that he entered on his charge, there was not an individual amongst the people who was not tainted with Antinomian doctrine, and not a few were shrewd and able defenders of it. He therefore never preached a sermon without discussing some great fundamental doctrine of the gospel; yet he never concluded a sermon without showing the holy and practical influence of that truth. In this way he secured the attention and regular attendance of all that really loved the gospel, and he offended none but those who could not bear the pure and strict morality of Christ. These persons soon saw the position in which they were placed; and although they found no small difficulty in maintaining their stand in opposition to their minister, without openly avowing themselves Antinomians in principle, which they were not anxious to do, yet they determined not to give up their ground without a struggle to maintain it. A leader among them therefore called upon Mr. Mather one Monday morning, and wished to ask him why, in the sermon of the preceding Sabbath, he called upon sinners to do what he knew that they could not do. The sermon had been on prayer. Mr. M. asked for an explanation. "Why," he said, "you call upon persons to pray, when you know that they cannot pray." "Oh!" said Mr. M., "I find the dispute is not between me and you, but it is between the Apostle Peter and you. Read in Acts viii. 22, what he said to Simon Magus—"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness; and *pray* God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." Now I ask you, was Peter right, or was he wrong?" His antagonist would fain have escaped from the question, but Mr. M. would have an answer, either yes or no; when at length he reluctantly said, "I suppose

that Peter must be right." Mr. M., however, did not let him escape with merely making this admission; for he showed him, that if it was not the duty of persons to pray, then they were doing their duty in not praying.

This conversation became known among the people, and the person with whom it was held, in reporting it, added, as his own opinion, that Mr. M.'s argument was invincible. The result was most satisfactory, for he never after had any challenge to discuss his principles, or any particular need to defend them, except in a single instance. At a meeting of young persons, which had been established for the purpose of explaining the word of God, a remarkably shrewd and very intelligent man attempted to show how ridiculous and absurd it was to call upon dead men to perform living actions. Mr. Mather, in reply, without using the terms natural and moral inability, endeavoured, in a simple manner, to point out the difference between them, and then proved, to the conviction of the whole meeting, excepting his opponent, that sinners are able to perform all that God calls upon them to fulfil, and that the only inability under which they labour is the want of will. The temper in which he was able to discuss the truth, greatly increased his ministerial influence.

The result of his preaching and these discussions was, that those who were decided Antinomians withdrew from him, and although he always addressed a large congregation, yet the whole aspect of the place was soon changed; and his labours were eminently successful, both in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of the people of God. At the same time, some of those that withdrew, mortified on account of their defeat, and envious of Mr. M.'s rising popularity and increased acceptance and success, endeavoured to vent their spleen in slanderous, but happily, unfounded reports. Although these things were a great trial to him, he still pursued the even tenor of his way; and, by the grace of God, he was enabled not only to meet them all, with a clear conscience and a bold front, but he was spared and upheld to outlive them all; so that, when at the end of more than nineteen years of pastoral labour in Sheffield, he was removed to another sphere of usefulness, he took with him the approbation and esteem of all the inhabitants of the town that were acquainted with his character and manner of life.

It was during his settlement in Sheffield that he was called to lose his wife—a dispensation of Divine Providence, which, while it put his faith to the test, also called into exercise some other features and graces in his character, for which he was distinguished. Mrs. Mather, who, at the time that they were married, was, like himself, not converted to God, became his most bitter opponent and unrelenting persecutor when he was called by divine grace. At length, however, in consequence of the death of a little boy, who was the idol of her heart, and in answer to the prayers of her husband, she was brought as a humble penitent to the foot of the cross; and, during the latter years of her life, rejoiced with him in the grace of God, and adorned her christian profession. At the age of thirty-six

years, however, on the birth of her tenth child, she was cut down, and he was left a widower with nine children, the oldest of which was not fifteen years, and the youngest only two days old. His situation can better be conceived than described. But, though "cast down, he was not destroyed." He devoted himself to his people and his family; and, for the comfort and encouragement of any that may be placed in similar circumstances, as well as to the honour of God, it may be stated, that of two that died before him—a son in his thirteenth year, and a daughter soon after her marriage—he had good ground to hope that they were converted to God before they were called away; while, of the seven that survive him, his two sons are in the ministry of the gospel—one lately settled at Bilston, in Staffordshire, and the other a missionary in India; his eldest daughter is the wife of a missionary in Canada, and the other four are all members of christian churches.

During the time of his stay in Sheffield, although his chief attention was directed to his own flock, it was not exclusively confined to them. He felt for destitute churches, and often supplied them; he promoted village and lay preaching; and he actively engaged in all societies and plans of usefulness which had for their object either the intellectual or the moral welfare of the town where he was settled.

After labouring nearly twenty years in this wide and important sphere, he saw it his duty to remove to Birmingham, being invited to succeed Mr. Eagleton, as pastor of the church assembling in Livery Street; but, after a residence there of about fifteen months, he resigned his charge, and removed to London, when he was invited to become the pastor of the church and congregation at Upper Clapton. After preaching to them for twelve months, he agreed to accept their invitation, and entered on the full duties of the pastorate. At first he had to contend with difficulties; but he surmounted them all, and lived for some years in the midst of an affectionate, united, and devoted people. His preaching was generally acceptable, and was eminently owned of God. Indeed, the cause was in so prosperous a state, and the applicants for seats in the chapel were so many more than it could accommodate, that the people felt called upon to enlarge their place as far as was possible, which was undertaken and completed under his management and direction.

But when he had succeeded in all his plans according to his heart's content, and nothing was wanting to crown his wishes but a greater revival of religion, and a more abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit—which was a subject that lay very near his heart,—and for the bringing about of which he had induced his people to hold a series of religious services, or what has been termed a protracted meeting,—several successive events occurred, which were to him dark and inexplicable, but which eventually induced him to resign his charge. It was a painful dispensation, a sore trial of his faith and submission—but he was enabled to say, "It is the Lord, and let him do with me whatsoever seemeth him good."

After leaving Clapton, Mr. Mather moved, for a short while,

from place to place, principally for the benefit of his health, but at length he took up his abode at Islington, and connected himself with the church under the pastoral care of the Rev. J. Blackburn, at Claremont Chapel, Pentonville, upon whose ministry he attended, when not engaged himself in ministering the word of life to others. But preaching was still his element, and it was, therefore, a great trial to him when called to be silent. It soon, however, became apparent, from the general breaking up of his constitution, that he could not long have sustained the duties of the pastoral office if he had not already resigned his charge.

After having remained a widower for more than twenty-one years, he entered a second time into the married life, by uniting himself, while he resided at Clapton, with the highly-respected widow of the Rev. Joseph Brooksbank, sen. This connexion relieved his mind from all anxiety as to his temporal circumstances. He had, therefore, the better opportunity of concentrating his whole thoughts and attention upon his spiritual condition; and he gave delightful, and, to the many friends who visited him during his sickness, most satisfactory evidence that he had not been put into the furnace of affliction in vain. At all times he was accustomed to observe those things, which were deeply and powerfully impressed upon his mind. In consequence of the application of those words, "I was brought low, and he helped me," he had, for a short while, a conviction that he should not then die, but live and declare the glory of the Lord; it was evident, however, to those that were privileged to behold him, and especially to come into close contact with him, that he was ripening fast for glory. His mind was not elevated with ecstatic or triumphant joys, but it was calm and tranquil as the summer sea. He could say, "I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." To Mr. Blackburn, who visited him, in addition to other remarks, he said, "I find the complete fulfilment of those words,—'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.'" He had no wish, in reference to himself, either as to his recovery or release, except as connected with the divine glory. If the Lord had work for him to do, he said, he knew that he would raise him up, and if not, he wished to be gone; and in the same tranquil and unbroken frame of mind he continued to the last.

On the day on which he died, viz. the 29th May, he requested two or three times his daughter, who was with him, to read him the 103d Psalm; and in the afternoon he inquired particularly if a letter had been sent to his son, who had been with him, but had returned into the country, under the full conviction that he was recovering, and that he should soon enjoy the pleasure of a visit from him; and he asked his daughter, did she think that it would bring him up? This was between four and five o'clock. To an attendant, who was in the room when he awoke out of a short sleep, about half-past six, he hurriedly asked, "Is he come?" but immediately appeared to recover himself. Perceiving an alteration in him, she called up his wife and daughter, who had, at his request, a short while before gone down

to tea. They immediately came up, when, while they stood around his bed, he, without a sigh or a groan, and indeed in a manner scarcely perceptible to them, quietly fell asleep in the arms of his Lord.

His remains were interred in Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington. It was his wish to have been laid in the Highgate Cemetery. He and his widow were walking over those beautiful grounds only about a fortnight before he was taken ill, at which time she seemed the more likely first to need a tomb, and, pointing to a spot, he said, "That would just do for me." In consequence of this expression, arrangements were made for his interment there—the spot was fixed upon—and it was expected that every thing was settled, when, upon going to the Company's office to have the ground conveyed, &c., it was found that the selected spot was consecrated, and that if his body was laid there, the family could not have the services of any one but a minister of the Established Church. Knowing how decided were his views as a nonconformist, and convinced what would have been his feelings, had he still been living, respecting the claim which was now made upon his family, either to forego his wishes, or to receive the services of the minister of a church to which they did not belong, and thus tacitly to sanction the system of which he so entirely disapproved, his widow and friends, after in vain attempting to obtain permission for the services of a dissenting minister, had but one course to pursue. As Abney Park Cemetery was just opened for interment by those who are not influenced by any such superstitious prejudices, and where no such absurd regulations have been adopted, and as that spot is peculiarly interesting, as the residence of the holy and eminent Dr. Watts, they at once determined to deposit his ashes there. It was a singular and interesting circumstance that his body was the first that was deposited in that beautiful ground, which circumstance suggested a striking remark in the address at the grave, that depositing within that virgin soil a body which had been for many years the temple of the Holy Ghost, was its most appropriate consecration.

The funeral took place on Tuesday morning, the 5th of June. The body was first taken to Claremont Chapel, where, after the usual devotional services, which were conducted by Mr. Blackburn, Dr. Leifchild delivered a striking yet beautifully simple and affecting address. The procession then moved to the cemetery, where the attendance, both of friends and strangers, was so great, that another service was felt to be indispensable. Mr. Blackburn, therefore, delivered an address; and Dr. Leifchild concluded the services of the interesting yet deeply solemn scene in prayer.

Sermons on the occasion were preached at Claremont Chapel, by Mr. Blackburn, from Isa. xxvi. 3; at Howard Street Chapel, by Mr. Bailey, from Rev. xiv. 5; and by his son at Bilston; at which large congregations evinced their respect for the character of our departed brother. The memory of the just is blessed.

ON PASTORAL VISITING; IN ANSWER TO THE INQUIRY, IS
IT THE DUTY OF MINISTERS TO VISIT THEIR PEOPLE
FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE?

As the ministerial office is one of the greatest importance, having been instituted by the Redeemer for the advancement of his cause in the world; bearing a relation almost entirely to the highest interests of man; being directed to that work by which the glory of God is most promoted in this fallen world; and consequently attended with the most solemn responsibilities; it is above all things desirable, that those who are engaged in it should clearly and satisfactorily ascertain what are the duties that devolve upon them. For if the ministers of Christ should be found to have habitually neglected any one duty which really belongs to their office; whether this arise from inattention, by which they were ignorant of the duty required; or from aversion to it, on account of its peculiar nature and difficulty; or from fear, lest by the discharge of it they should give offence and expose themselves to danger; whatever may be the cause, if there is a neglect of a plain duty, it must involve in it very fearful consequences. This must be the case with the point before us. If visiting from house to house is a minister's duty, either clearly expressed or plainly implied in the scriptures of truth, then it cannot be habitually neglected without guilt and danger; then, whatever self-denial it may require, whatever difficulties may attend it, how much time soever it may consume, or labour demand; they must attend to and pursue it as a regular part of the duties of their course, which they cannot disregard without sin against the Saviour and the souls of men. We should come to this inquiry, then, with all seriousness of spirit.

It is evident, that there is a general impression on the minds of Christians that it is the duty of ministers to visit their people; and there has been an extensive impression on the minds of ministers also that this is a part of duty which belongs to their office. And when we find such an eminently holy man as Baxter, who had an extensive acquaintance with his Lord's will, who was entirely devoted to his work, and supremely desirous to know and to fulfil all the duties of his office; when we find such a man pressing this as an important duty on the attention of his brethren; urging it on their consciences in the most fervent manner; rousing them to it by the most spirit-stirring motives; and charging them with awful guilt if living in the neglect of it;* and at the same time exemplifying it in his own practice; we should not rashly and hastily conclude that there is nothing in it, and that it does not claim our regard. We apprehend, also, that amongst those who do not practically attend to this as a duty, there is at times a considerable degree of uneasiness about the matter; a suspicion still lurking in the mind lest they should be neglecting that which is incumbent upon them; a fear lest, after all, they should not be doing in this way what a minister

* *Vide* Baxter's "Gildas Salvianus," or "The Reformed Pastor."

of Christ ought to do, in order to fulfil the will of his Lord, and to promote the spiritual interests of his people to the extent that is required.

There is considerable difficulty in coming to such a question with an unbiassed mind. There appears to be something very formidable in the right discharge of such a duty, if it should prove to be one; and we have some prepossessions on the subject which are apt to exert considerable influence on the judgment we form. But if we sincerely desire to know the will of our Lord, what he would have us to do, and to attend to all that will, whatever it may be, it is possible, surely, for us to obtain some satisfaction on this point. For this purpose we must come solely to the word of God, where we have the institution of the ministry and all its duties pointed out.

If this is a duty, seeing it must then occupy a very considerable portion of the time and attention of ministers to discharge it efficiently, we might naturally expect to see it very expressly enjoined, very clearly stated, and all that is connected with it defined with peculiar accuracy. We find the great duty of preaching the word very fully, repeatedly, and solemnly enjoined, and all that relates to it pressed upon our regard; the principal subjects to be insisted upon in preaching, the spirit in which it is to be discharged, the manner in which it is to be pursued, the objects at which it is habitually to aim. As in the language of Paul to Timothy, "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine." This is only one passage amongst very many others that might be quoted which relate to this great part of ministerial duty. But it is a remarkable fact, that we search in vain for any such injunctions in reference to visiting the flock. Whether we look through our Lord's instructions to the seventy disciples that he sent forth as his ministers into the cities and villages of Judea, or observe his commands to his twelve apostles: whether we search through the charge that the apostle Paul delivered to the elders or pastors of the Ephesian church: whether we carefully peruse the inspired epistles to Timothy and Titus, two ministers of the gospel, which epistles abound with exhortations adapted to the ministerial office: or whether we examine any other incidental statements, which occur in other parts of the inspired writings, relating to the office and duties of ministers, there is nothing of this kind any where expressly enjoined upon them, or stated to be a part, a necessary part, of their work. We no where find it said to them, "You are to visit your people from house to house; you are to go and inquire statedly and frequently into the spiritual state of all the families and individuals under your charge in their own dwellings; for without this you can never fulfil the duties that devolve upon you, as faithful ministers of Christ, appointed to attend to the spiritual interests of men, and to advance the kingdom of your Redeemer in the world."

It is rather surprising that such a point, if it be a duty, should not be clearly stated at all, nor once enjoined, nor so much as mentioned, in any inspired precepts addressed to the ministers of the gospel, or in any statements relating to their character and work.

It is remarkable, that though the eminent Baxter states this to be a duty of binding obligation upon ministers, yet, when he comes to prove it, there is no express command on the subject; he draws it merely as an inference from other things which are enjoined, and from other statements and principles which are plain. But the mind naturally inquires, how it is, if it is so important and necessary a duty, which must occupy so much time and attention, that it is not expressly commanded or clearly stated. Here we fail in obtaining any further satisfaction, and we are left, if it is a duty, to draw it forth by inference or analogy. We know that this is the case in some instances, and may be the case in this. Some duties are plainly implied, which are not clearly enjoined; some things are sustained by analogy, which are not expressly commanded. This is the ground that we must take, and this is the ground, we apprehend, that is generally taken, if visiting is regarded as a ministerial duty. We shall endeavour to examine it a little.

There are some directions given to the ministers of Christ of so extensive a nature, that it is considered by some that they cannot be fully obeyed without visiting all the people under their care; such as, "Take heed to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof." "They watch for souls, as those that must give account."

It is supposed that these directions imply such a particular care over, and such an exact and strict attention to, every part of our charge, every individual under our care, as must require an actual and personal intercourse with all; such as cannot be effected without visiting them from house to house, to inquire into their state, and to obtain a correct knowledge of their spiritual condition and wants, so that we may minister to each case according to its necessities.

Further, this is thought to be implied in the terms by which the ministerial office is sometimes designated, as ministers are called "bishops or overseers," "pastors or shepherds," "watchmen," &c.

It is thought that a minister cannot fulfil his duties as an overseer of his people without he looks into every case, becomes acquainted with every character, so as to know all their spiritual state and wants, and administer to them accordingly.

It is considered that a pastor must particularly attend to the state of all the flock; observing every individual case: that as a shepherd looks to all the sheep under his care in a particular manner, so he who is appointed to act as the shepherd of souls, must, by analogy, pay the same regard to all the flock over which he is placed, which it is considered cannot be done without visiting them from house to house.

As the christian minister is called a watchman, and is appointed to watch over the interests of the church of Christ, to watch for souls, and to warn men of their danger, so it is supposed from this, that he should so particularly observe the condition and dangers of each individual, that it must be requisite for him to go from house to house actually to look into their spiritual concerns, to discover their true state, and to warn them individually, as he may find it requisite to their safety.

Now, the great point of inquiry here is, are these inferences fairly drawn? Do the exhortations quoted really include so much by fair interpretation, or by clear implication? Does the analogy between the office of a christian minister, and that of an overseer, a shepherd, or a watchman, hold to such an extent as this? Does it fairly lead to this conclusion, that the duties of the office cannot be fulfilled without this personal inspection, visiting every house, and inquiring into the state of every individual under our care?

That these exhortations do require most evidently, and that these titles do imply most clearly, that the ministers of Christ are diligently, constantly, faithfully, and closely to attend to the state of the people over whom they are placed, that they are to observe and to understand their condition, so as to make a suitable provision for their wants; to feed the church of God; that they are to watch over them so as to be awake to every danger to which they may stand exposed; to give suitable, solemn, faithful warning; and habitually to watch for the promotion of their spiritual welfare; all this we think must be fully admitted. Ministerial duty is evidently something more than studying a sermon or two weekly, preaching them before the people, and then having no further intercourse with them, and paying no further attention to their state. But while it goes much further than this, we are apprehensive that it does not go so far as this system of pastoral visitation would require.

If a minister is generally resident amongst his charge; if he is ever ready to attend to all cases that seem to require his aid; if the inquiring, the anxious, the distressed, engage his particular attention; if, at all suitable seasons, he will meet such, to administer to their state, or if he is ever accessible to them when they need his help; if he is studying habitually for the benefit of his flock; if he is endeavouring to present the rich, the ample, the various truths of divine revelation before them in their mutual connection and relative importance, that he may be as a workman needing not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, giving to every one a portion of meat in due season; if he meet them for social exercises of prayer and christian intercourse at appointed periods, and is ever watchful for their good, then, we apprehend, it may be justly considered that he is attending to all that is demanded in the precepts given, and to all that by analogy is fairly drawn from the terms by which his office is designated in the word of God. Then he is taking heed to all the flock, directing an observant eye over the whole, and is in an especial manner attending to any case that demands his particular regard; then he is feeding the flock of God with the food of heavenly truth; then he is watching for souls as one that must give an account, without visiting his people from house to house. Then, as a shepherd, he collects his flock together at certain times, he observes their general state, and any particular cases of wandering, disease, or danger, he selects and attends to. Then, as a bishop or overseer, he looks over the whole; and whatever requires his special attention, he is there ready to render his aid. And we think that more solid, real, permanent good will be the result of his labours in this way, than if he spent a large portion of

his time in going from house to house by a system of pastoral visitation; because this practice must deprive him of much of that time which is necessary for the improvement of his own mind, that he may be increasingly fitted for the discharge of the duties to which he is called, to enter into the word of truth, and to bring forth from that sacred treasury things new and old, so as to continue to interest and improve the people amongst whom he labours by his public ministrations. If what has been stated is considered to go to the extent of what the word of God contains on the subject, then we are brought to the conclusion, that it is not a necessary part of a minister's duty to visit his people from house to house.

But there is one passage that we would not pass over; viz. a passage contained in Paul's address to the elders of the church at Ephesus, referring to his own conduct while he was with them, which has been brought forward as presenting an example for the imitation of ministers in general, as if it was obligatory on them to conform in this point to the conduct of the apostle. His language is: "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and taught you publicly, and *from house to house*." It appears from this that it was the practice of the apostle, while he resided at Ephesus, not only to preach in public assemblies, but also to visit them at their own houses; further, to instruct them in things of God; and by the adoption of this means the interests of religion would, no doubt, prosper to a much greater degree under such a minister as Paul, so remarkably endowed with gifts and graces.

But then the difference between the circumstances of Paul and those of the ordinary ministers of the gospel, must be taken into the account before we decide how far his practice, in this respect, is to be imitated by us. He was divinely inspired, and miraculously qualified for his work, and therefore did not require those aids which the ordinary ministers of the gospel need to fit them for public engagements. He might give up the largest portion of his time to such visits and such efforts, and yet never be unfitted for dispensing the truths of the gospel in an interesting and useful manner to those to whom he ministered in public; while, if an uninspired minister was to do the same, if his powers of mind were not of an extraordinary kind, his public discourses must soon be of the most meagre and miserably uninteresting character. If a person has a mind capable of doing this, and yet at the same time of keeping up the interest of his public discourses, then it may be suitable for him, in some measure, to imitate the conduct of the apostle; but as this cannot be supposed to be generally the case, the practice of the apostle here cannot be a model for general imitation.

There are some individuals occasionally appear in the church of Christ, who are able to do a great deal in the way of personal inspection and pastoral visitation, and yet maintain the usefulness of their public labours. Such an instance was Baxter himself, whose mind never seemed to tire, whose spirituality and devotedness appeared to suffer no decline, and who had powers of thought and a fulness of information ever ready to promote the improvement of

others, both in public and in private. But, then, this is not the rule, but the exception; and, consequently, what he did is not a rule to apply to all the servants of Christ. The multitude of books which he wrote might almost as well be made a rule for the authorship of others, as the multitude of visits that he paid be made a rule for the visitations of others. There can be no doubt but that great good would result from the pastoral visits of such a man, conducted in such a manner as he himself describes; but it appears to us questionable whether he does not ascribe too large an amount of that good, which he was the instrument of effecting in Kidderminster, to his pastoral visiting; and whether it was not far more to be ascribed to his peculiarly powerful and impressive preaching. According to his plan of going round to all the families in the parish, he could only visit the same house once in the year, while most of the members of those families were probably hearing his public discourses every Sabbath in the year; so that the far greater degree of good, we conceive, is to be ascribed to his public labours, and the divine blessing attending his faithful ministry.

This appears to us to correspond with the divine appointment, that the public preaching of the gospel should be the great means, above every other, for the conversion of sinners unto God, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. It is the "preaching of the cross that is the power of God unto salvation." "By the foolishness of preaching God saves them that believe."

Though every other pious, well-meant endeavour to promote the salvation of men by any other private means, may be attended with a divine blessing, and may prove extensively useful as auxiliaries in advancing the cause of Christ, yet the great means appears to be the public preaching of the word of God. Consequently, if this is correct, the first object with the ministers of Christ should be, that their public preaching may be conducted in the most useful manner; and whatever plan would tend to impair the efficiency of their public labours, must be considered as improper, as neither their duty to pursue, nor the interest of the church to require. And we believe that where one, such as Baxter, has pursued the plan of pastoral visitation without injury to his public labours, hundreds have been injured, and have been rendered comparatively, if not altogether, inefficient as ministers of the gospel of Christ in their great duty of preaching the word. Where this plan is attempted, unless there is an eminent degree of devotedness on the part of the minister, so that he never loses sight of the great end at which he is to aim; and unless there is a considerable degree of readiness on the part of the people to fall in with his aim, to promote their spiritual improvement, by conversing with them on their state and prospects godward; unless this is the case, pastoral visiting is likely to degenerate into mere idle chit-chat, or to be nothing better than a system of religious gossiping.

In a paper, written by the late Mr. Fuller of Kettering, when he had been engaged nearly forty years in the work, there is an observation of this kind: "That from a disposition to live a life of ease and indolence, (if life it may be called,) many ministers have got

into the habit of spending a large part of every week in gossiping from house to house, not promoting the spiritual good of the people, but merely indulging themselves in idle talk. I might add (he observes) that it is from this disposition and practice that a large portion of the scandals amongst ministers have arisen." It is evident that visits conducted by a minister of the gospel, in such a manner, if carried on to any great extent, must have such a pernicious influence, as rather to counteract than to aid the design of his public labours.

Unless pastoral visits can be really of a pastoral character, for the promotion of the spiritual welfare of the people, and agreeable to the spiritual nature of the ministerial office; if they are only to be calls of common friendship and civility, trifling ceremony, idle gossip, or foolish jocularity; the less they become general the better, for instead of this kind of pastoral visiting being the duty of a minister of Christ, we may conclude, without hesitation, that carried to any extent it would *be a sin*. The waste of time that it occasions, which might be employed in the improvement of the mind and in preparation for more public usefulness, is not the least of the evils connected with such a system. And yet this is the kind of visiting which many of the hearers of the gospel wish for from their pastors!

Those hearers who complain the most of their ministers not visiting them, would wish for it the least in many cases; if they expected their minister would come to inquire into their spiritual state and prospects, to point out their deficiencies, to administer reproof for their sins, faithfully to press their duty home upon their consciences, to see how their families are trained, and to examine them on the things of God—many would rather be excused from their minister visiting them in this manner in his character as a pastor, to attend to their spiritual condition. There are some indeed in most congregations who desire the assistance of their minister amidst the perplexities they feel and the dangers to which they are exposed, and would like to open their mind in private conversation with him, that they may obtain his help in the things of God. But such persons are generally willing for such a purpose to wait on the minister upon whose instructions they attend; or they will find that he is ready to wait on them, as soon as he knows that they want him for such an object.

Visits to the afflicted, and to those under any peculiar trial, are clearly incumbent upon the minister of Christ; for as it is a part of pure and undefiled religion to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, as well as to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, those who are employed in teaching this religion to others must exemplify this as well as other duties of it in their own practice. And as the afflicted are directed to send for the elders of the church that they may pray over them, so those elders or pastors must ever stand ready to obey such a call, and to attend without delay to such cases.

In a large congregation there may be many afflicted persons, visits to whom will occupy some considerable portion of a minister's time.

But there he has his errand with him, and his work before him; the circumstances at once call him to that kind of conversation, and to those exercises which correspond with his character and work as a minister of Christ; and at such seasons pastoral visits may be the means, suitably conducted, of conferring the greatest benefits on those that are favoured with them.

From the whole we appear to be conducted to the conclusion, that visiting a people from house to house is not a ministerial duty;—that it is not enjoined upon ministers in the word of God;—that it is not clearly implied in the representations given of their character and office in the scriptures;—that it is not incumbent on them from the example of inspired ministers of the gospel;—that were it attended to extensively by ordinary pastors, it would impair the efficiency of their public ministrations; that consequently the former should give way to the latter;—and where it is pursued in a trifling manner, more harm than good is the necessary result. May He who has given pastors and teachers to his church, afford his special guidance and blessing, so that they may be increasingly useful in the great work of turning sinners to the Saviour, and leading on his saints in faith and holiness, that He in all may be glorified in all his churches, and by all his ministering servants.

T. C. A.

ESSAYS ON THE BOOK OF JOB.

No. VI.

BY THE REV. RALPH WARDLAW, D.D., GLASGOW.

WE have formerly considered two of the four things enumerated as contained in the first chapter of this Book,—namely, 1. The character, property, and domestic circumstances of Job:—2. The charge brought against him by Satan, and the permission granted by Jehoyah to put that charge to the proof.

In our present paper we shall offer some observations on the other two—the first series of the patriarch's trials—and his behaviour under them.

III. The brief narrative of the first series of his trials is contained in verses 13—19, to which the reader is referred.—The facts themselves are familiar to every reader of the Bible, and in themselves stand in need of but little explanation. They include the destruction, by successive calamities, of *all his property*, and *all his family*.

On one of those days of social festivity, when he was experiencing the solicitude of a pious father respecting the behaviour of his sons, as before noticed on verse 5, there comes to him a messenger, breathless with the eagerness of haste, as the bearer of important, and, from his look and manner, evidently of no pleasant intelligence:—"The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them; and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I

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only am escaped alone to tell thee." The settlements of the Sabeans were at some considerable distance from the land of Uz;—but they were accustomed to roam far and wide, in predatory bands, being a race of plundering free-booters—"Well,"—might the good man think, on hearing the hurried tidings from their agitated reporter,— "this is a heavy loss;—but it is only a part of my substance:—I have still, thanks to my God, much remaining. My trusty servants, indeed, I cannot recall—and for them I must mourn; but the loss otherwise I can bear, and can in time make up." If such a reflection did pass through his mind, it was but for an instant. There was not time allowed him to think, either of the cause, the effect, or the remedy. Ere the first messenger had well finished his brief report, a second arrived, with similar mien and similar news:—"The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them;—and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."—Here was the immediate hand of God;—and his hand is laid, not on the marauding and murdering robbers, in vengeance for their crime, and in vindication of his injured servant, but on another valuable and interesting part of his property; even on those flocks, from which the altar of Jehovah had been furnished with so many bleeding victims, and whose fleeces had warmed, and whose milk and whose flesh had fed, so many of his poor and suffering fellow-creatures! This was mysterious; and especially at such a juncture. God appears as if "contending with him"—setting himself against him. It might be a very natural question to suggest itself to his mind, and to start at the moment to his lips—Are the camels, then, safe? But he has not time even for such a question. Another messenger, a third, is already on the spot: "The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away; yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." Thus, all is gone; and "the greatest of all the men of the East" is in one hour pennyless! The wealth of the patriarch had contributed to his enjoyment, not merely from the variety and abundance of personal and domestic comforts it brought within his reach, but by its furnishing him with the means of doing good to others, of promoting the interests of true religion and the well-being of society, and—what no right-hearted parent can be indifferent about—making future provision for his family. To the members of that family,—his seven sons and his three daughters,—we may now imagine him, as far as the stunning effect of such successive communications—coming thus suddenly, and with a certainty that left no room for hope—would admit, turning the eye of affectionate thought, and saying in his heart—"Ah! my beloved sons and daughters, God had graciously given me all this wealth, and I had hoped to leave it as an inheritance to you. But he has been pleased to order it otherwise. It is gone;—all gone;—the accumulating acquisitions of many years gone in a day—in an hour—in a moment! Such is his will. And perhaps it may be better for *you* as well as for *me*. It may be, (O that by his grace it may,) for your spiritual good, for your best interests, for the profit of your souls!"

Did such reflections pass through his mind? We cannot be sure. But if they did, they too were but for a moment,—formed and gone in the same instant,—and gave place to thoughts and feelings unutterably more agonizing than the loss of property, to what amount soever, could possibly awaken. Alas! these very children lived not to be sensible of the loss. A fourth messenger is at hand; and the last and heaviest stroke comes upon him with equal suddenness: “Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house; and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee!” O ye parents, who cling to your children with the inexpressible tenderness of parental love, what a stroke was this! From his conduct, as before illustrated (on verse 5,) we learn that he was no man of apathy; that his affections, both natural and spiritual, were strong and sensitive. No attempt is made to depict his emotions; and I shall make none. With those who have the hearts of parents, the only wonder will be, that he was left in possession of his understanding.

Let it be observed, in what manner these successive disasters are arranged. Had the last been first, he would have had no feelings left for property. His children—his ten children—his seven sons—his three daughters,—all buried in the ruins of their “banqueting house,”—and at one of those very seasons that had always awakened his timid solitudes about their spiritual character,—all gone, and gone without a parting farewell, and he knew not in what state of mind! O what effect could tidings about sheep, and asses, and oxen, and camels, have had upon a heart stunned and stupified by such intelligence?

Before proceeding to notice Job’s behaviour under this series of trials, I would offer an observation or two on the agency of Satan in their production.—The principal difficulty, on this subject, lies, not in his being the instigator of the plunderers in their deeds of rapine and murder,—for this belongs to the general power ascribed to him as a tempter; but in the supposition, entertained by many, of his wielding the elements of nature, producing the lightning and the tempest by which part of the calamities was wrought.—On such a subject I would not presume to speak with confidence; but I must freely avow, that I have no conception of any such thing,—no faith in it whatever.

1. Allow me, in the first place, to compare the case with that of an authenticated *miracle*. In customary language we speak of the prophet or the apostle as having *done* the miracle. But in speaking so, we do not mean to express so flagrant an absurdity as that the power by which it is done actually resides for the time, by transference, in the human agent. It is God, by his own power, that effects it,—interposing at the will and intimation of his messenger. It was not Moses or Aaron that smote the Egyptians; it was not Peter or Paul that gave sight to the blind, and soundness to the lame, and health to the diseased, and life to the dead.—But persons are frequently represented, in Scripture language, as *doing* that which God

does either *by* them, or *for* them, or *at their will*. This is exemplified, not only in the case of miracles, but in the case of judgments, wrought *in behalf* of those whose part is taken by an avenging God. See, in illustration of this principle of interpretation, Rev. xviii. 4-8.; Rev. xi. 6.; Rev. ii. 26, 27. Is it necessary, then, in the present instance, to suppose more, than that Jehovah did these things in conformity to Satan's malignant wish and suggestion, with a view to the trial of his servant, and at the same time, along with the manifestation of the falsity of the devil's accusations, in order to the purification of his graces from the alloy of corruption with which they were still blended?—And is not the case, in fact, similar, in every instance in which Satan obtains an advantage, for plying his temptations, from the circumstances in which believers are placed by providence, of which the God of providence previously knew he would avail himself?

2. Creatures may produce their little imitations of the wonderful phenomena of nature;—but to wield on such a scale the material elements, belongs, I am fully persuaded, exclusively to Omnipotence. What are we to make, on any other supposition, of the appeals of Jehovah, throughout his word, to such controul as one of his own prerogatives, and the sign of his presence and interposition? What are we to make of his sublime appeals in this very book—"Who hath divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of the thunder?"—"Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?"—"Hast thou an arm like God? Canst thou thunder with a voice like Him?"—The thought is to me insufferable, of any inferior agent actually possessing and exercising such power as this. If you once admit the principle, —then, when the rolling thunder and the restless lightning fill your spirit with the sublime emotions of reverential awe, and the shrinking humility of a conscious impotence, and

" 'Tis listening fear, and dumb amazement all;"—

or when the tempest bursts forth in its impetuous fury, bearing all before it, sweeping away the property and the habitations of men, and strewing the ocean with wrecks,—how distressingly are our minds disturbed, amidst the full and solemn recognition of the might and majesty of the omnipotent God, by the intruding recollection that the immediate agency by which all these tremendous scenes are produced is, or may be, the agency of the prince of darkness!—Nor do I feel myself at all satisfied or relieved by being told that the dependent and malignant agent can go no further than he is *permitted*. The question still recurs—Does the "wicked one" possess power, even *when permitted*, such as enables him to perform these wonders—to wield the elements of nature in the thunder and the storm? If he does, how inevitably and how painfully is the impression impaired of the peculiar and exclusive omnipotence of that infinite Being, who, for the purpose of giving us this impression, makes his lofty appeal to these very scenes, as the special manifestations of his own power? Ps. cxxxv. 7.; cxlviii. 18; Amos iv. 13.;

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Job xvi. 14; Ps. lxxvii. 18.; civ. 7, &c. In reading an ode of such incomparable sublimity as the twenty-ninth psalm, how would our minds be affected, were we told, that "the voice of Jehovah"—"powerful, and full of majesty—breaking the cedars of Lebanon—making the mountains to skip like a young unicorn—dividing the flames of fire—shaking the wilderness—making the hinds to calve—and discovering the forests,"—that this voice, with all its overawing effects, is no more than evil angels, *if but permitted*, can produce! What a deduction would such an assurance make from the energy and elevation of the closing words—"In his temple doth every one speak of his glory!"*

3. The language of the apostle in Eph. ii. 2. does not afford any solid support to the ordinary notions on this subject. There Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air;"—to which designation different senses have been attached. Into these it is not my business to enter largely and critically. The meaning of the designation most generally adopted, and apparently the true one, is that which, considering the word translated "power" as signifying those by whom power is possessed and exercised, explains "the prince of the power of the air" as meaning "the prince, or ruler, of the aerial power"—that is, of those hosts of evil spirits which were believed to have their residence in the air, and to be ever passing to and fro invisibly there, in the execution of their purposes of malignity and mischief. His power over the physical elements of our atmosphere, would have been little in congruity with the apostle's subject; nor would it, especially, have been in harmony with the remaining words of the verse, in which, according to the regular construction of the original, he is, at the same time, denominated the prince "of the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."†

4. It may be further urged, that the good angels are represented as producing the appearances of terrific majesty, at the giving of

* The inference is still stronger, if we adopt Bishop Horsley's translation, which is in accordance with that of the margin of our English version:—"And in his temple all this proclaims his glory!"

† I must refer the reader who understands Greek to the original, where he will immediately see that—"the spirit, &c.," does not agree in case with "the prince, &c.," but is regularly governed by it on the same rule of syntax on which "the power of the air" is governed by it.—I cannot concur with Bloomfield in supposing *το πνευματος* to be for *το πνευμα* "by a slight anomaly in construction," of which his account does not appear to me satisfactory. I must refer the reader also to Wolfius, Doddridge, Macknight, and Schleusner.—The first treats the attempt as trifling to make "prince" and "spirit" agree, and, apparently taking "the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience" collectively as expressing the entire combination of evil spirits, brings it into agreement with "the power of the air." The second and third consider "the spirit" as equivalent to the *disposition or temper of mind*, by or over which Satan maintains his rule in the "children of disobedience."—The last interprets "the power of the air" as equivalent with "the power of darkness," and supports it by various references to the use of the word *ἀνθρ* and its cognates in profane authors.—If a sense could be suggested of "the power of the air," such as would make it naturally coincide with "the spirit that now worketh, &c." as meaning the *disposition*, it would render all plain.

the law, on Mount Sinai.—That the law was given “by the disposition of angels,”—(ὡς διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων—probably by their appointed ministry in its promulgation)—and that is called “the word spoken by angels,”—I do not deny.—But to what extent their ministry, on that solemn occasion, reached,—what they might do in the production of the sounds and voices by which the law was uttered, I will not take upon me to say, finding, as we do, “the voice of the archangel and the trump of God” mentioned more than once in opposition. But, declining, as I do, to enter into any discussion of the amount of power possessed by the spirits of light—the “angels that have kept their first estate,”—I must satisfy myself with saying, that I have no belief that they, any more than their fallen compeers, the spirits of darkness, have any such power, as to qualify them for producing, by any direct agency, the thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquake, the “blackness, and darkness, and tempest.” There does not appear to me to be any thing in the Scriptures that warrants, far less that necessitates, such a belief.

IV. The last of the four things to be noticed in this first chapter is—*Job's behaviour under this series of trials*:—“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the earth, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!”—There is here, first, *deep heartfelt grief*. It is expressed by what were then its customary tokens, into any explanation of which, it would almost argue insensibility, amidst such a scene, to enter. Strongly as he must have felt the loss of his property, and still more—much more—that of his servants—it was neither nor both of these that laid him thus low. It was the last blow that stunned and prostrated him. It is the *father's* heart of which chiefly the anguish is thus expressed. Had Job not *felt* his trials, there could of course have been no *patience*, no *resignation*; for patience and resignation presuppose feeling; and their amount, when exercised, must be estimated by the amount of feeling. He felt as a proprietor, as a master, as a father, as a saint, under the heavy strokes of the rod of divine correction. But amidst his agonizing grief, the *submission* is perfect. His spirit, though agonized, is not so phrensied and distracted, as to refuse to think of God, or to admit the consolations of religion. This, it is to be feared, would, in like circumstances, have been the case with too many of the children of God. They are apt, on such occasions, to think, that there can hardly be feeling if there is comfort, and to act as if it were almost a duty to “refuse to be comforted,” in order to show that they feel.—It was not thus with Job. He “fell down upon the earth, and worshipped.” This is the sublime of sorrow. It betakes itself to God. It “humbles itself under his mighty hand.” It casts itself down before him in the deepest prostration of a “broken and contrite spirit.” It melts, but does not murmur. It is amazed, but still submissive. It feels itself “perplexed, but not in despair,—cast down, but not destroyed!” How different the spirit of Job from the spirit of Jonah!

There is here, further, a renewed and powerful impression of the vanity and emptiness of all earthly possessions and sources of enjoyment—"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither"—that is, to the womb of Earth, the great producer and nourisher of all the sensitive existence on it and in it. The language is equivalent to that of Paul—"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." 1 Tim. vi. 5. The meaning of the patriarch does not seem to have been, that, in consequence of having thus been *stripped of all that pertained to him*, he should return naked to the womb of his parent Earth; but rather that, even had he continued in his best estate, in the full possession and enjoyment of all his prosperity, such must at any rate have been the case—that this is the true account of all—"high and low, rich and poor together." "When he died," had he prospered to the end, he could have "carried nothing away."—It is as if he had said—"These things were necessarily but for a season. I could not have taken them with me to the grave. And the God by whom they were given, has only stripped me a little earlier of what I must soon, at the longest, have left behind me."—Compare Eccles. v. 14—16.

And this leads me to notice, further, the devout acknowledgment of God's hand in his bereavements as well as in his enjoyments:—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away."—There is here, what is always becoming and beautiful in adversity, the grateful recollection of what God had given, and so long permitted him to enjoy. He does not dwell exclusively upon the *loss*. But in the loss, as well as in the previous possession, he recognizes the divine agency. He does not, in a tumult of frantic violence, vent his imprecations on the banditti that had plundered his property and butchered his servants:—"Men were but God's hand." He does not curse the lightning and the tempest, the unconscious instruments of his heaviest bereavements: it was God that "made a way for the lightning of the thunder,"—and "the stormy wind fulfilled his word." To HIM, the supreme and uncontrollable Disposer, he traces all.

And he *still blesses*:—"Blessed be the name of the Lord!"—How finely this stands in contrast with the charge of Satan, verse 11—"But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and will he then bless thee to thy face?"—The charge of his malignant and false accuser is thus thoroughly refuted. The patriarch had blessed God when he gave:—all is taken from him: and he blesses still. "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly:"—the latter phrase giving the true *spirit* of the original Hebrew, which is, literally, "nor vented froth against God."*

To go further at present, would be to anticipate the second series of Job's trials, which, with his conduct under them, shall be the subject of another paper;—the one now closed being, at any rate, already too long.

* In the margin of our English Version—"nor attributed folly to God."

REMARKS ON DECAYED AND DECAYING CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

I HAVE the happiness of knowing several ministers, well stricken in years, who are now presiding over flourishing churches and extensive congregations. It cannot be said that they at all resemble Apollos, who was an "eloquent man;" they have no pretensions to oratorical power or elegant gesticulation; they seldom speak of the sun, the rainbow, the woods, the flowers, or the birds, things true and beautiful in their place, but which the popular taste would often put sadly out of place, by giving them a preference to the naked truths of the gospel; their manner in the pulpit is grave, and by many would be considered dull, while their enunciation is slow, and their periods unpolished; with the utmost justice they might adopt the words of the apostle, "and I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God." Yet these men, in the decline of life, with their physical powers daily exhausting, see no diminution in the number of their hearers, and no deterioration in the spiritual state of their flocks. I have several of them in my eye at this moment. For a series of years they have walked worthy of the gospel in private, and with the greatest plainness have urged its truths in public, without witnessing any retiring in weariness from the sound of their voice, or sinking into apathy under its well-known intonations. Still it must be confessed that there are such scenes in the congregational world, as those which your correspondent X. sketches in your last,—aged ministers, who, after years of servitude, have the painful spectacle before them of an increasingly scanty attendance upon their sabbath ministrations, and of dull, drowsy, dwindling churches. Now it is a grave, practical question which your correspondent suggests, how this last state of things is to be remedied, but I submit, that in order to answer it a prior question must be proposed, and that is, how it has been produced? Let it be kept in mind that no fault can be found with the ministers in question on the ground of false doctrine or of moral character; it is presumed that they are orthodox in their creed, and godly in their walk; and it is supposed by your correspondent that the sad condition of their respective charges is to be primarily referred to their want of popular talents. This is not my opinion; and I bring forward the case of those ministers first mentioned against it; and just as I hold the Jewish church responsible for the non-success of Elijah, Jeremiah, and our Lord, so I hold the particular churches in the present day, whose condition is so deplorable, while, in the circumstances presumed, responsible for their impoverishment. Both the principles of the New Testament, and facts open to observation, warrant me in giving the following explanation of the distressing phenomena under our notice. The people calling themselves Christian have ceased to receive the truth in the love of the truth, to value it for its own sake, and to prize it as the word of God and not the word of man. The Holy Spirit, grieved by their misconduct, has withdrawn those blessed influences

which are necessary to keep them alive to their own spiritual improvement and the salvation of others; in cold formality, or under the power of an absorbing worldliness, they have mismanaged that "new generation" which has deserted the old minister—and the servant of the altar, perhaps after fifty years of faithful servitude, thus goes to his grave with regrets obtruded upon his ear, about his lack of physical energy and popular address.

With reference to remedial measures, these should be as follows:—

1. The respective churches of which we are treating must be renewed again unto repentance. There should be those confessions of personal and collective sinfulness, that humbling of themselves before the Lord their Maker, that godly sorrow before an offended God, and those supplications for forgiveness in their individual and corporate character, which are essential to a devout state of heart and life, and especially necessary to a restoration from a condition of religious decline. I would not recommend them to take a minister of shining talents as the grand desideratum, but to take Daniel's prayer without delay:—"O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear, open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name, for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken, and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God; for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." Then when this is the desire of their hearts, and the prayer of their lips, He who ministers in the true sanctuary, and who has received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, will dispense that stream of celestial influence which will correct the evil that exists, and re-invigorate the enfeebled principles of faith and love.

2. It is of immense importance that scriptural views of the design of the ministry should be entertained, and a suitable demeanour towards it be practised, in order that these churches, when reformed, may continue so, and go on to prosper.

It is granted at once that the ministry has been appointed for the "perfecting of the saints," but instead of this being its exclusive object, there is another to which this is subordinate and ought to be made subsidiary, even that of bringing men in a rebellious state to be reconciled to God, and not to carry the weapons of their warfare against him brandished to the grave. It has been, however, too much the case, that demands have been made upon the ministry at variance with that attention to this object which its importance demands; the church has stepped in with its own wants to be ministered unto, and its own appetite for soothing to be gratified; and though he who rightly divides the word of truth will give it a portion of meat in due season, yet it should be remembered that the church has al-

ways the means at hand of helping itself, apart from the ministry in the written word and promised spirit; and that therefore, instead of reposing upon the ministry, as though its state was infancy, and its duties nought, both should be confederate in getting men out of the snare of the devil, and proposing God's message of mercy to a perishing and guilty world. If such, then, is the chief design of the ministry, it follows that to aid in its accomplishment, there must be a deportment on the part of the church in harmony with that design, and this deportment will embrace a scriptural regard to the truth taught, and the teacher teaching. Our Lord said to his disciples, "take heed how ye hear;" the apostle Paul declared to one of the early churches, "despise not prophesyings;" the injunction was issued to another, "desire ye the sincere milk of the word;" and "faith," we are told, "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It may come, indeed, in other ways—it may come by reading, meditation, or prayer—but experience proves that, as a general rule, faith comes not apart from the word, nor commonly apart from its vocal ministration. If, therefore, those who are already under the influence of the word would help it to influence those who are not, they must practise a reverent behaviour themselves towards its outward ministration; they must take heed how they hear; they must despise not prophesyings; they must desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby; and just in proportion as their deportment is adverse to this are they hindering and not helping the truth; for if they are heedless in hearing, or show any disposition to despise in hearing, or betray little anxiety to profit by hearing, so far they give encouragement to a profane world to persist in its heedlessness and despisings, and thus contribute to render its hostility to the gospel deeper and more inveterate.

3. A just estimate of ministerial duties, and of the obligations of the people, must be obtained in order that these churches may be reformed, and become flourishing communities.

There are some, and it is scarcely to be doubted not a few, who fancy the ministry to be a work of no difficult performance—who think of it as only involving a slight amount of care, and thought, and exertion—whose ideas of its public exhibitions seem formed upon the supposition that it is a perfectly free, spontaneous, and extemporary exercise—who feel justified, therefore, in the quietude of their homes, in subjecting it to the most rigid examination, upon the principle that what is the very easiest thing in the world to be done, ought to be executed in the most perfectly faultless manner, and to meet the demands of their taste, no matter how fastidious it may be. But, in reality, this treatment is unmerited, and the notions that generate it are altogether unfounded, for I never met with one who succeeded in edifying others, without in the first instance undertaking the task of edifying himself; I never heard of one, since the dispensation of miraculous gifts ceased, who succeeded in edifying himself to any extent upon the lofty topics of divine truth, without some measure of patient and laborious application; and I never wish to see such a state of things return to the church, as for either its

ministers or its members to be satisfied with being children in understanding, instead of in understanding being men. As the consequence of these views, however, the circle of ministerial engagements has been unscripturally extended; the work that should be performed by the people has been uncereemoniously thrown upon the preacher; and he has not come up to their expectations, unless in addition to giving them things new and old in the sanctuary; he has visited the sick without knowing of their sickness, paid morning calls to the healthy, and mixed in evening parties with the gay; yielded personal attentions, repeatedly called for to schools, tract societies, and bible classes; in short, become himself that spiritual engine which the church should be, he under God being part of the motive power. Though I travel a little out of the record, I cannot refrain from expressing my conviction, founded upon a calm perusal of the New Testament, that both the church and the ministry are in some degree of practical error as to their mutual relations and occupations. Because the term shepherd is applied to the latter, there has been a transference of the ideas suggested by the literal to the spiritual pastorate—the demand has been made for repeated private ministerial visitation without special cause, just as though the sheep were in reality part of the helpless and irrational creation—whereas the task of “building up yourselves” is stated in the epistles as a personal obligation; the work also of private visitation is mentioned as a christian duty, therefore as much belonging to the members of the church as to its ministers; the onus is likewise laid upon the sick to send for the elders; and the pastoral visiting which is specially enjoined, is the mutual coming together of the minister and the flock in one place, to preach and to hear the word. These may be thought bold assertions. I know that they run counter to popular opinion. I do not make them, however, without due consideration, and to me they appear of great practical importance, because, where the ministry is loaded with avocations belonging to the church, it is so far enfeebled in ability to discharge its peculiar and pressing duties. For myself, I am clearly of opinion that the churches of our denomination are in the habit of expecting far too much from their ministers, while rendering them far too little assistance, nay, occasioning them a vast deal of needless labour. We have no mere liturgy to read; we are not accustomed to preach other men’s sermons; neither have we in general the means of keeping curates. I blame no man for raising high the ministerial standard; let it go up to the mark to which the Scriptures take it; but, in the name of right and honesty, let the churches standard go up to the same mark likewise; and when I hear an individual murmuring over the low state of things in the church, and throwing blame upon the minister for it, I feel that there is a previous question to be settled before that man’s judgment can be allowed to pass current, and that I have the right to ask him, whether Paul could or would have said concerning him, what he said of one, “Salute the beloved Persis, who laboured much in the Lord.”

4. In those cases where the “new generation” has gone off from

the old minister, that particular evil in general cannot be remedied, but its causes may be ascertained, and a similar occurrence be guarded against in the future.

Your correspondent attributes the secession to the captivations of a "more popular style of preaching;" but this is only skimming along the surface, and not looking to the root of the matter; for how comes it to pass that the "new generation" has not withdrawn from the ministers I first mentioned? Perhaps ill training on the part of the parents has had more to do with the circumstance than any other cause; and here I do not allude to the neglect of those duties which enter prominently into household discipline, but to a mode of dealing with the teacher of divine truth, which directly tends to neutralize his teachings. I have no extravagant notions of ministerial office. I have little respect for the pretensions of those men who claim to be the immediate dispensers of heaven's grace, and to have the keys of the kingdom dangling at their side. Still the ministry is the appointment of Jesus Christ, and error is committed, and mischief is done, where it is not scripturally regarded as such, for by not respecting the teacher in the way his office and character have demanded, the truth taught is sure, in some degree, to be stripped of its influence. It may be done thoughtlessly, but there is nothing more calculated to hinder the gospel of Christ than that discussionary spirit which many bring and take away from the public services of religion—that disposition to lay hold of any flaw in its ministration, and to carry the tidings of it wherever they go—that exercise which many perform as regularly as the sabbath comes, the submitting the messenger and the message of God to the not very charitable ordeal of public criticism. The moral influence of this practice is most tremendously bad. Let a child grow up familiar with this mode of dealing with the services of the sanctuary—let him witness his parents forget the matter of the message they have heard, and expatiate only upon the merits of the man—and no wonder is it if that child should wander after the showy, though the superficial, and should turn out a thorough enemy to the cross of Christ. I think, therefore, that, in nine cases out of ten, where the "new generation" has deserted the aged religious instructor, the blame lies with the parties who have had the immediate training of it in their households; and that those who mourn over the occurrence, may, by inquiring into its cause, learn how to behave themselves wisely in a perfect way.

5. Your correspondent, referring to the retirement of ministers in years, and of the old school, from their charges, where the interests of religion are on the decline, and the blame lying not, be it remembered, at their door, speaks of the "rights of churches." Now, this phraseology sounds oddly in relation to people who have so grievously misconducted themselves; and I, for one, am disposed to deny the moral right of any church proposing the retirement of its minister under such circumstances. Still it may be conceded that some change in the ministry is desirable in such cases, though what that change should be must depend upon local matters, and ought not to be effected by infringing upon the "rights of the ministers"

without their free consent. In general, I would say, the decayed church should repent and do its first works; its members should make up for past neglect by an abounding liberality; an associate and helper should be found for the man who has grown old and grey in their service; then let the old man rest while the young man works, and the young man turn out of doors to preach while the old man ministers in his accustomed place; but let the old man, if accordant to his wishes and necessities, be honourably retained, as long as God shall spare him, in his office, with its usual emoluments untouched. I dislike co-pastorships, such as commonly obtain among us—the juxta-position in office between the young and the old—the placing of the novice and Paul the aged upon the same level. It has to me a very ungraceful aspect, and is not in harmony with my view of the things that are lovely, or with that subordination which ought to be observed by the members of the body of Christ; and, therefore, I should advocate the continuance of an aged minister as the sole pastor, while able in any degree to discharge the duties of the office, his associate being simply his assistant. Never, however, will these cases be properly met and remedied, until our body has a general fund for the maintenance of those whom age or infirmity disqualifies for their work; and it may be hoped that the Congregational Union will, ere long, vigorously endeavour to raise a fund for this purpose, from annual ministerial subscriptions, and congregational collections.

Lest I should be suspected of selfishness in making these remarks, I truly subscribe myself,
Sept. 11th, 1840.

A MINISTER,

Under thirty-three, and at work.

A SECOND COMMUNICATION ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

(To the Editor.)

DEAR SIR,—The subject brought forward by your correspondent X. *On decayed and decaying Congregational Churches*, has long pressed on my mind as one of no ordinary importance. Confessedly an evil does exist, and the great question is, how is it to be remedied? Christians who see the evils so ably pointed out in the paper referred to—I mean influential men in the body, would do well, in setting on foot some comprehensive measure that would place superannuated ministers above want or anxiety. And this would only be an act of justice to a class of men, a large proportion of whom have had, through life, such a limited income, that it is not to be supposed they have had it in their power to lay up an adequate provision for old age.

Some of the best friends of the voluntary system have long considered a fund for the support of superannuated ministers as a great desideratum in the churches. Instances, I apprehend, in various parts of the country, could be adduced, in which aged ministers have continued their labours in the pastoral relation longer than was for the good of the community. Now, when a minister tenaciously retains office, when a change appears desirable to such as have the

best interests of the church at heart, he may be unconsciously inflicting an injury on that church which years cannot repair; so that, instead of enjoying the quiet of retirement, his last days may be embittered by seeing the cause of the Redeemer dwindling and declining under his hands.

I believe, too, that a minister who voluntarily and disinterestedly retires from office at the right time, with the view of promoting the people's real benefit, is more respected and beloved for so doing, by those who knew that he was no hireling when in the full exercise of all the powers with which the Great Head of the Church had endowed him. Many good men, it is to be feared, have outlived their usefulness, by clinging longer to the office of pastor than they should have done.

It does not follow that, because a minister resigns the pastoral duties, he ceases to be a labourer in the vineyard in other departments. How useful might such men be as occasional preachers, such as might be still capable—as spiritual advisers—as influential members of committees? How useful, from their experience, might many of them be to their junior brethren in the ministry, who would cultivate their acquaintance, and would imitate their example, in so far as it was worthy of being imitated. In short, we can conceive of retired ministers being a great blessing, wherever Divine Providence may place them, in carrying forward the work of God by visits to the afflicted—by conversing with candidates for christian communion—by succouring the tried and the tempted from the stores of their observation and experience—by strengthening the weak, and comforting the feeble-minded. And what an edifying sight, to see an aged servant of Christ endeavouring to promote, according to his opportunity and ability, the kingdom of Christ, wherever he may be placed. Such men are worthy of double honour.

There are two or three things I would suggest as a practical conclusion to this letter. And,

1st. While ministers of the present day are promoting, by every means in their power, home and foreign missionary objects, shall not some comprehensive plan be adopted to smooth their own declining years, if they require it?

2dly. Is it not desirable that churches which had the services of ministers during their best days, when capable of it, should be expected to do something for them while they live in advanced life, if they require it?

3dly. Are we to wonder, that if there has been such a culpable omission in the duty owing to poor aged ministers, it should be visited with something like a retributive punishment, in the decayed and decaying state of many of our churches?

I am, dear Sir, your's very truly,

Sept. 9th, 1840.

ALIIQUIS.

REV. D. E. FORD'S EXPLANATION TO OUR REVIEWER.

(To the Editor.)

MY DEAR SIR,

As the reviewer of "Decapolis," in your last number, p. 622, expresses a wish that I had given a short account of the work of God which I have been permitted to realize, together with the steps which I have taken, intimating that "a judicious publication of such facts would answer the end of precedent in law to a barrister, or facts in physiology to the anatomist," common courtesy demands that I should either comply with his wish, or give my reasons for declining to do so. The second seems to me the wiser course :

1. Because I demur as to the general propriety of publishing to the world the religious experience of living characters, especially when the most interesting particulars (as is almost always the case,) are those which have been communicated with an assurance of the most perfect confidence.

2. Because of the possible injury which such a course might inflict on the individuals concerned. Hitherto, I have had no reason to suspect the sincerity of any who have excited my hopes; but human nature is human nature still, even when renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. I would not willingly expose young converts to the temptation of thinking themselves very extraordinary specimens even of divine grace. In the most overwhelming revivals of religion, there has been nothing half so strange, as that men should listen to the gospel, that "dispensation of the Spirit," all their lives, and after all, die in their sins.

3. Because I contend that, as a whole, we are still below the mark. Many have been brought to God, but there are yet some left of whom I stand in doubt, and others are yet unsaved. We shall never reach the apostolic standard while a single hearer remains unconverted. "Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, *that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*"

4. Because there is nothing in our relative position, as a church, to command the attention of the world. We are but few among the thousands of Judah. Our chapel, when every sitting is occupied, only holds three hundred people: there is no possibility of its enlargement, and if there were, it would be useless, as the ground is already occupied by other denominations. Moreover, the population of the town is on the decline, as any stranger may perceive on passing through our streets and observing the vast number of empty houses. To designate the gracious awakening with which we have been favoured, "a revival," would therefore hardly accord with the views of those who invariably associate with that term, the idea of an extensive ingathering of souls from the profligate and abandoned world. We may say, as Paul did, "And such were *some* of you," but for the most part, those recently brought to God had attended the preaching of the gospel, and maintained an irreproachable character before men, all their days. The chief thing that would strike a stranger in visiting us would be, the proportion of the church to the congregation. I have comparatively few to hear me who are not

members, or candidates for church fellowship; and I think it due to myself and my friends to state, that this unusual proportion is not the result of laxity of discipline.

5. Because I hardly conceive myself to occupy a position which authorizes me to supply "precedents" to my brethren: I have had some experience, and can boast of some gray hairs. Should I be spared to the age of our friend, Dr. Redford, and outlive all the parties concerned, I may perhaps follow his example in cutting out a few leaves from my "Pastor's Sketch Book," and sending them to the printer, but till then, I should not think myself justified in such a procedure.

But while for these reasons I decline to meet the wishes of your reviewer, I have no objection frankly to state the process by which my own mind was gradually led to the adoption of what some would call "new measures." I had seen so many souls, in all directions, perishing in their sins because the truth of God had failed to reach their hearts, that I became persuaded that there must be something radically defective in the usual modes of stating it. I have not resigned one atom of the truth which I formerly held, but I admit, as true, some representations of divine sovereignty and human responsibility which I formerly questioned or denied. The substance of the views which I hold, and which I devoutly acknowledge God has been pleased to bless to the conversion of many souls, I have already stated in the little book the review of which has occasioned this letter. Let those who demur, answer my arguments, or rather let them direct their impartial attention to those scriptures on which those arguments, to me at least, appear to be founded. I contend that we have left the apostolic model of preaching, and that until we return to it, we shall never realize apostolic success. And it greatly cheers my heart to find that many, very many, of my brethren are adopting the same views. One, whose praise is in all the churches, says, "Sure I am that until the habits of ministers and christians in general become such as your statements are designed and adapted to make them, it is perfectly utopian to expect what is commonly called the glory of the latter day." And another, who occupies a high station in the Presbyterian church, in our sister land, writes, "I am quite satisfied with the correctness of all the views you bring forward in 'Decapolis.' I hope to be the better for it myself, and to do good to others by recommending it to their perusal. I am well convinced that all the observations it contains are true."

If from the press those representations of the claims of Christ should be accompanied with the same measure of success as attended them from the pulpit, mine will be the best reward an author can receive,—the approbation which cometh from God only. To all other praise I am growingly indifferent.

Your's in the gospel of Christ,

DAVID EVERARD FORD.

Lympington, September 2, 1840.

ON THE LAWFULNESS OF MARRYING THE SISTER OF A
DECEASED WIFE.

SIR,—Your correspondent T. G. has brought under the notice of your readers a very doubtful and difficult question, which requires, on the part of all who undertake to discuss it, the utmost delicacy.

I do not propose to enter upon the general consideration of such a subject, but wish to direct his attention and that of your readers to the elaborate discussion of the whole question, in a small volume, by an eminent American lawyer, S. E. Dwight, who brought to the inquiry the acuteness of the jurist and the biblical knowledge of his learned father, the Rev. Dr. Dwight. A Scotch edition of the book has been printed at Glasgow, with a preface by Dr. Wardlaw, who remarks very truly that its title smacks a little of the *quaintness* of former times. It is called "The Hebrew Wife: or the Law of Marriage, examined in relation to the lawfulness of Polygamy, and to the extent of the law of Incest." As that book is not within the reach of all your readers, I wish to quote a passage or two that bears upon the remarks of your correspondent. T. G. observes—

"If marriages were made with a total disregard of the ties of consanguinity and affinity, it could not fail to produce numerous evils; but the wisdom of God has provided a preventive." And, afterwards, he refers "especially" to the 16th verse of the 18th of Leviticus, in proof of the *moral lawfulness* of a man marrying the *sister* of his *deceased wife*. I would request him to refer also to the 21st verse of the 20th chapter, and I imagine that further reflection will lead him to acquiesce in the conclusion of Mr. S. E. Dwight on "Collaterals of the first Degree by Affinity," page 77, that "these passages, in express terms, forbid marriage between a husband's brother and a brother's wife. But the propinquity between a wife's sister and a sister's husband is identically the same. Hence,

A woman may not marry her
Husband's brother,
Sister's husband.

A man may not marry his
Brother's wife,
Wife's sister."

Respecting the use of "the word *wife*, not *widow*, in the 16th verse," and the limitation and explanation supposed by T. G. to be contained in the 18th verse, I beg T. G. to refer to page 83 of "The Hebrew Wife," and he may be brought to think with Dr. Wardlaw that it was "happily providential" that the author's mind was directed to the subject.

I am Sir, your's faithfully,

W. J.

Sept. 7th, 1840.

R E V I E W .

Memorials of the Right Reverend Father in God, Myles Coverdale, sometime Lord Bishop of Exeter; who first translated the whole Bible into English: together with divers Matters relating to the Promulgation of the Bible, in the Reign of Henry the Eighth. 8vo. pp. 250. London: Samuel Bagster.

WHEN the venerable Coverdale had closed his long and painful pilgrimage, a resting-place was found for his care-worn body in the church of St. Bartholomew the Less, by the Royal Exchange, where, as his monumental inscription expressed it, "after being long tossed by various calamities, the friendly earth received him to her bosom."^{*}

That church perished, together with more than four-score ecclesiastical edifices, in the fearful conflagration of our ancient city, September 2d, 1666, and was rebuilt of stone in a handsome style, at the public charge, in 1679. To widen the intended approaches to the new Royal Exchange, it has been determined to remove this commodious church, and the parish authorities, as we learn from the newspapers, are at the present moment employing great care to secure the decent removal of the relics of the dead who have been interred within its walls to another place of sepulture. The same authorities state that

— "The body of Myles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, and the translator of the first Bible which received the royal sanction, has not yet been discovered, and from the great lapse of time since he has been interred, in 1568, it is rather uncertain whether it now will. In case of his relics being found, there are three claimants who are anxious to be possessed of them. The Bishop of Exeter is desirous to have them removed to the cathedral of that city, he having been appointed to that see in 1557; the Rev. Mr. Leigh, the Rector of St. Magnus, London Bridge, wishes them to repose in the burial ground of that church, to which he was appointed rector in 1563; and the Bishop of London also claims them, in whose disposition they will probably remain."—*Evening Paper*, copied into the *Record*, Aug. 27th.

Assuming these statements are true, what are we to think of the consistency of the dignitaries in question? Can his Lordship of Exeter, with his well-known Anglican opinions, have any heartfelt sympathy with the scriptural protestantism of Myles Coverdale? Can his Lordship of London, the most rigid disciplinarian on the

^{*} Honest John Stow gives us the copy of a Latin inscription which the margin of Mr. Strype's folio edition describes as upon "a fair plated stone, on the ground in the chancel." This, we presume, was lost in the fire of London, and never restored. It closes thus—

"Sic illum variis
jactatum casibus, ista
Excepit gremio
terra benigna suo."

bench, sanction the ecclesiastical irregularities for which "poor old Myles" was ejected from his living? Yet these prelates, it seems, would fain "give commandment concerning his bones," and wish to rebuild his sepulchre!

The ecclesiastics of Judea, almost two thousand years ago, professed greatly to honour the memory of the martyred prophets, and were very zealous to build or to beautify their tombs. Who dreamed, amongst the silly multitude of that day, that these chief Rabbis did not truly love the doctrines, nor sincerely deplore the doom of those faithful servants of the Most High; yet there was ONE who dared to say to them "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets."

We apply not these impressive words to the right reverend prelates, but quote them to show how hazardous it is for those who do not approve of the opinions of the old confessors, to court popularity with the multitude, by building shrines for their bones. As, however, it is highly probable that the remains of the venerable Coverdale were long ago irrecoverably mingled with the ashes of the kindred dead, we shall avail ourselves of this accidental notice of his name, to invite the attention of our readers to these "Memorials," which ought, before this, to have been brought before them.

In attempting to furnish an account of this interesting and neatly-printed volume, it will be proper to observe, that the materials of the work are derived partly from the best printed authorities, and partly from original manuscripts, documents unknown, except to those who have examined the records of our country. These Memorials, we add, discover patient research, judicious arrangement, sound discrimination, and no inconsiderable portion of impartiality; and there are very few superfluous materials introduced to fill up and lengthen the narrative. The style in general is chaste and familiar, being well adapted to the subject; and the volume is embellished with a beautiful and highly characteristic portrait of good old Coverdale. Our author having briefly stated the early history of Coverdale, reminds the reader that he was the pupil and companion of Dr. Barnes, one of the Marian martyrs, for whom he cherished the warmest attachment. When the Doctor was carried a prisoner from Cambridge to London, he was not deserted by his friend; but Coverdale accompanied him, and remained with him, and wrote for him. Coverdale, who had entered the ministry at a very early period, was naturally of a zealous and courageous temperament, regulated, however, by intelligence and piety. He was singularly upright and sincere in what he professed; and while "others dedicated themselves in part only, he gave himself up to propagating the truth of the gospel." He was a wise and intrepid reformer; though he had, in the fate of Dr. Barnes, a proof of the danger to which he was exposed, and an example of the doom that awaited him, if he persisted in the course he had adopted.

He could not, however, sacrifice his conscience and his principles for worldly emolument and honour, or even to preserve his life. He, therefore, determined to forsake his native country, and fled to Holland, where he united with the celebrated William Tyndal in translating the Holy Scriptures. Tyndal had already published a translation of the New Testament, and sent it to England for circulation; but it was called in and publicly burnt, by order of Tonstal, Bishop of London. This, however, had not the effect which the crafty prelate expected; for a second and a third edition presently followed. His suppressing and burning the Word of God, while it damaged the reputation of the priesthood, only excited the people's curiosity to possess the despised and persecuted volume.

Coverdale and Tyndal translated and published the Pentateuch in English, which was "Emprinted at Malborow (Marburg) in the land of Hesse, the yere of our Lord MCCCCXXX, the xvii daye of January." It was reprinted in 1534, as a prelude to the publication of the entire Scriptures. The two translators, having so nobly began, pressed forward their godlike task with intense and unremitting labour; but Tyndal being apprehended and cast into prison, the completion of the work devolved on Coverdale; who, encouraged by the promise that others would bear the cost, published, in 1535, a translation of the whole Bible in one volume folio. This was the first English translation of the Bible ever printed. In the last page are these words, "Prynted in the yere of oure Lorde M.D.XXXV. and fynished the fourth daye of October."

Coverdale, in a spirited dedication addressed to king Henry VIII. reminds the haughty monarch that he had derived the title, "defender of the faith," from the "blind bishop of Rome." For the gratification of our readers, we insert the following extracts from this dedication:—

"The blind bishop of Rome, not understanding what he did, gave unto your grace this title, 'defender of the faith,' only because your highness suffered your bishops to burn God's word, the root of faith, and to persecute the lovers and maintainers of the same; where, in very deed, the blind bishop, though he knew not what he did, that by the righteous administration and continual diligence of your grace, the faith should be defended, that God's word, the mother of faith, with the fruits thereof, should have free course throughout all Christendom, but especially in your realm. The bishop of Rome, not knowing what he did, gave your grace this title, that your grace in very deed should defend the faith, yea, even the true faith of Christ, no dreams, no fables, no heresy, no papistical inventions, but the uncorrupted faith of God's most holy word. The pope keepeth the word of faith secret, lest his own decretals and decrees, his own laws and constitutions, his own statutes and inventions, should come to none effect: lest his intolerable exactions and usurpations should lose their strength: lest it should be known what a thief and murderer he is in the cause of Christ, and how heinous a traitor to God and man, in defrauding all Christian kings and princes of their due obedience: lest we, your grace's subjects, should have eyes in the word of God, at the last to spy out his crafty conveyance and juggling: and lest men should see, how sore he and his false apostles have deceived all Christendom, especially your noble realm of England. For he knoweth well enough, that if the clear Sun of God's word come once to the heat of the day, it shall drive away all the foul mist of his devilish doctrine; therefore, were it more to the maintenance of antichrist's kingdom, that the world be still in ignorance

and blindness, and that the Scripture should never come to the light. The Scripture is the cause of all felicity, it bringeth all goodness with it, it bringeth learning, it giveth understanding, it causeth good works, it maketh children of obedience, it teacheth all estates their office and duty. Seeing, then, that the Scripture of God teacheth us every thing sufficiently, both what we ought to do, and what we ought to leave undone: whom we are bound to obey, and whom we should not obey: therefore, I say, it causeth all prosperity, and setteth every thing in frame: and where it is taught and known, it lighteneth all darkness, comforteth all sorry hearts, leaveth no poor man unhelped, suffereth nothing amiss unamended, letteth no prince be disobeyed, permitteth no heresy to be preached: but conformeth all things, amendeth what is amiss, and setteth every thing in order." He then adds:—"I do, with all humbleness, make this protestation, having God to record in my conscience, that I have neither wrested nor altered so much as one word for the maintenance of any manner of sect; but have with a clear conscience purely and faithfully translated this out of five sundry interpreters, having only the manifest truth of Scripture before mine eyes."—pp. 51—56.

Coverdale subjoined to this dedication a prologue, from which we have made the following extracts:—

"To say the truth before God, it was neither my labour nor desire to have this work put in my hand: nevertheless it grieved me that other nations should be more plenteously provided with the Scripture in their mother tongue than we: therefore, when I was instantly required, though I could not do so well as I would, I thought it yet my duty to do my best, and that with a good will. We have great occasion to give thanks unto God, that he hath opened unto his church the gift of interpretation and of printing, and that there are now at this time so many who, with such diligence and faithfulness, interpret the Scripture, to the honour of God and edifying of his people, where, as when many are shooting together, every one doth his best to be nighest the mark. For the which cause, according as I was desired, I took the more upon me to set forth this special translation, not as a checker, not as a reprovor, or despiser of other men's translations, but lowly and faithfully have I followed mine interpreters, and that under correction. And though I have failed any where, as there is no man but misseth in something, love shall construe all to the best, without any perverse judgment. There is no man living that can see all things; neither hath God given any man to know every thing. One seeth more clearly than another; one hath more understanding than another; one can utter a thing better than another; but no man ought to envy, or despise another. He that can do better than another, should not set him at nought that understandeth less: yea, he that hath the more understanding, ought to remember that the same gift is not his, but God's; and that God hath given it him to teach and inform the ignorant. If thou hast knowledge, therefore, to judge where any fault is made, I doubt not but thou wilt help to amend it, if love be joined with thy knowledge. Howbeit wherein soever I can perceive by myself, or by the information of others, that I have failed, (as it is no wonder,) I shall now, by the help of God, overlook it better and amend it."—pp. 59—61.

In the next he furnishes appropriate and important advice to those who read the Scriptures:—

"Now will I exhort thee, whosoever thou be that redest scripture, if thou find ought therein that thou understandest not, or that appeareth to be repugnant, give no temerarious nor hasty judgment thereof; but ascribe it to thine own ignorance, not to the scripture: think that thou understandest it not, or that it hath some other meaning, or that it is haply overseen of the interpreters, or wrong printed. It shall greatly help thee to understand Scripture, if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom and unto whom, with what words, at what time, where and to what intent, with what circumstances, considering

what goeth before, and what followeth after. For there be some things which are done and written, to the intent that we should do likewise: as when Abraham believeth God, is obedient unto his word, and defendeth Lot his kinsman from violent wrong. There be some things, also, which are written to the intent that we should eschew such like: as when David lieth with Uriah's wife, and causeth him to be slain. Therefore, I say, when thou readest Scripture, be wise and circumspect; and when thou comest to such strange manners of speaking, and dark sentences, to such parables and similitudes, to such dreams and visions, as are hid from thy understanding, commit them unto God, or to the gift of his Holy Spirit in them that are better learned than thou."—p. 62.

We cannot withhold another extract, calling the Christian to a recollection of the mercies he has received from God, as a powerful excitement to sympathy and kindness to others:—

"Call to thy remembrance how loving and merciful God is unto thee; how kindly and fatherly he helpeth thee in all trouble, teacheth thine ignorance, healeth thee in all thy sickness, forgiveth thee all thy sins, feedeth thee, giveth thee drink, helpeth thee out of prison, nourisheth thee in strange countries, careth for thee, and seeth that thou want nothing. Call this to mind, I say, and that earnestly, and consider how thou hast received of God all these benefits, yea, and many more than thou canst desire, how thou art bound likewise to show thyself unto thy neighbour as far as thou canst, to teach him if he be ignorant, to help him in all his trouble, to heal his sickness, to forgive him his offences and that heartily, to feed him, to cherish him, to care for him, and to see that he want nothing. If thou be a preacher, and hast the oversight of the flock of Christ, awake and feed Christ's sheep with a good heart, and spare no labour to do them good; seek not thyself, and beware of filthy lucre; but be unto the flock an example, in the word, in conversation, in love, in ferventness of the spirit; and be ever reading, exhorting, and teaching in God's word, that the people of God run not unto other doctrines, and lest thou thyself, when thou shouldst teach others, be found ignorant therein."—pp. 63, 66.

In these extracts the reader is furnished with a fair specimen of Coverdale's style of writing; and from whom we could not, in justice, withhold the appropriate instructions they afford. He discussed other topics, both in the dedication and prologue, in which he no doubt intended to convince king Henry, that those who favoured the Protestant doctrine were not enemies to regal authority; that so far from being promoters of sedition and treason, which was insinuated to the king, they were zealous supporters of his power against the pope and his clergy; and that whilst they advocated the free circulation of God's word, they inculcated, as a primary duty, obedience to the king. By the circulation of the Bible in English, the light of divine truth spread among the people, who discovered a keen appetite for the bread of life; but this roused the baser passions of the right reverend fathers. When, therefore, Coverdale presented the Bible to king Henry, his majesty handed it to bishop Gardener and his colleagues for examination. They kept the book so long, that at last Henry called for it himself. When they delivered it to the king, he demanded their opinion of the translation; and they answered, that there were many faults in it. "Well," said the king, "but are there any heresies maintained in it?" They replied, "there were no heresies that they could find." "If there be no heresies," said Henry, "then, in God's name, let it go abroad among the people." Though

it is somewhat difficult to ascertain whether this edition of the sacred volume was published by royal authority; yet it is certain that Henry avowedly approved of it, and sanctioned its circulation. A beautiful edition of this Bible, in black letter, was re-printed verbatim by Mr. Baxter in 1838.

Those who delight to trace the rise and progress of the reformed religion in England, must look back to this period with considerable interest. The first effective and only certain means of correcting abuses, and of leading men into the right path, were brought into operation by the zeal, and labour, and learning of Myles Coverdale. The translation of the word of God, into a language which they understood, opened the fountain of sacred knowledge to all who were desirous of instruction. It was no longer confined to the learned and studious few; but the most ignorant and uninstructed could examine the doctrines of Christ, and learn the right way, "for which they had been obliged to resort to men who were only less ignorant than bigoted and superstitious; to men, whose interest it was to prevent them from the exercise of an unbiassed and rational judgment; to men, who enforced less the truth and importance of religion, than a blind and an absurd devotion to ceremonial observances." Coverdale, by his learned and persevering efforts, obtained that celebrity among Protestants, and conferred those benefits on society, for which his memory will long be revered, and his name transmitted with distinguished honour to posterity. In England, as in other parts of Europe, the printing and circulation of the Scriptures in the vernacular tongue, was the grand, efficient instrument, under God, of enlightening the minds of the people, of meliorating the severity of the government, of rescuing the nation from popish vassalage, and of effecting, to some extent, the great work of ecclesiastical reform. It is well said that Coverdale, by the translation of the Bible, "rocked the cradle of the Reformation!"

We have dwelt long, but, we hope, not too long, on this portion of the work now before us. In commenting on some other facts recorded in this interesting volume, we must be very brief, seeing we have already exceeded our limits. Coverdale, after the first effort, did not relinquish the work of translation; but consecrated his studies to it through many succeeding years, and laboured more than any other man to accomplish that important service for the christian church. The first edition, though "admirable for the simplicity, perspicuity, and purity of its style,"* was, in the opinion of Coverdale, very far from being perfect; nay, he frankly acknowledged that it contained "many faults," which, if spared, he promised to amend. This he accomplished by the numerous and improved editions which he published. The critical notice of these successive editions would be a subject of great interest, could we afford space for it; but we must content ourselves with referring the reader to the author's Appendix, where he will find an interesting bibliographical account of *seven* editions of the Bible, and not less than *nine* of the New Testament.

* Carpenter's Bib. Com. p. 41.—Horne's Mem. p. 34.

The measures for reformation at first adopted by those in power, tended to dissipate the darkness which prevailed throughout the land. Lord Cromwell, the constant friend and patron of Coverdale, appointed, as Vicar-General, in 1538, that the Bible should be set up in all the parish churches, for the use of the people who wished to read it; and ordered the clergy not to discourage them, but to exhort all persons to read or hear the word of God; "admonishing them, nevertheless, to avoid all contention and altercation." The king also issued a royal proclamation, that the people who read the Bible should not be too much governed by their own fancies and opinions, nor engage in open disputes at taverns and ale-houses, but consult such learned men as were authorized to preach; so that his majesty might perceive that every one used this "most high benefit quietly and charitably, to the edifying of himself, his wife, and family, in all things answering to his highness's good opinion conceived of them." His majesty afterwards issued certain injunctions, commanding the Bible to be placed in every parish church, to the intent that all his majesty's loving subjects minding to read therein, might not only perceive the ineffable omnipotent power, promise, justice, mercy, and goodness of Almighty God, but also learn to observe God's holy commandments, obey their sovereign, exercise godly charity, and use themselves according to their vocations in pure and sincere piety, without murmuring or grudging; but that no laymen, reading the Bible, should presume to enter into any disputation, argument, or exposition, but only reverently read for their own edification; and his majesty required that all who held cures, should, under the penalty of forty shillings a month, provide a Bible in their parish churches; and he fixed the price at which the sacred volume should be sold.

The inconstancy and caprice in which King Henry indulged was, doubtless, most gratifying to his imperious and arbitrary temper, but degrading to his character, and most oppressive to his people. His noble and prelatial vassals flattered him in the indulgence of his slavish passions, until he not only betrayed an awful want of princely goodness, but often exhibited most savage despotism. This became, indeed, a leading feature in his character; and he was just as much the pope of England, as the pontiff was of Rome. In open defiance of justice and Christianity, he claimed the high prerogative of doing what he pleased with the word and people of God; and, through the instigation of his bishops, he required all the copies of the Bible to be called in and suppressed! His majesty commanded, "that no women, nor artificers, apprentices, journeymen, serving-men, husbandmen, nor labourers, should read to themselves or any other, privately or openly, the Bible or New Testament in English;" yet the haughty monarch, as an act of courtesy and kindness to other subjects, permitted "every nobleman and gentleman, and merchant, being householders, to read it privately!" This despotic act was followed by his majesty's forbidding all his subjects to import or purchase Tyndal's New Testament and Coverdale's translations, or any books set forth in the names of Frith, Tyndal, Bale, Turner, Coverdale,

and other learned reformers, on the penalty of punishment according to his majesty's pleasure !

Coverdale, after the happy accession of King Edward VI., returned from the continent ; and having obtained high distinction for learning and piety, he was made Bishop of Exeter ; and no man was considered so fit for that promotion as Myles Coverdale.* How he fulfilled this important appointment, will be seen in the following sketch of his character, as furnished by a contemporary, which will no doubt be acceptable to our readers :

"Coverdale most worthily did perform the office committed unto him. He preached continually upon every holiday, and did read most commonly twice in the week, in some one church or other within the city. He was, after the rate of his livings, a great keeper of hospitality, very sober in diet, godly in life, friendly to the godly, liberal to the poor, and courteous to all men ; void of pride, full of humility, abhorring covetousness, and an enemy to all wickedness and wicked men : whose companies he shunned, and whom he would in no wise shrowd, or have in his house or company. His wife was a most sober, chaste, and godly matron ; his house and household, another church, in which was exercised all godliness and virtue. No one person being in his house, who did not from time to time give an account of his faith and religion, and also live accordingly : and as he had a care for the good success in religion, so had he also for the direction of the government in ecclesiastical causes : and because he was not skilful therein, neither would be hindered from his godly studies, and be incumbered with such worldly matters ; which nevertheless he would have done in all uprightness, justice, and equity, he sent to Oxford for a learned man, to be his chancellor, and by the ministry of the writer hereof, he procured and obtained one Master Robert Weston, doctor of the civil law, and afterward Lord Chancellor of Ireland, unto whom he committed his consistory, and the whole charge of his ecclesiastical jurisdiction ; allowing unto him, not only all the fees thereunto appertaining, but also lodged and found him, his wife, family, horse, and man, within his own house, and gave him a yearly pension of sixty pounds. And surely, the bishop was no more godly and careful of his part, concerning preaching, but this man also was as diligent and severe in doing of his office, without reproach of being affectionated or corrupted. And notwithstanding this good man, now a blameless bishop, and lived most godly and virtuous ; yet common people, whose old bottles would receive no new wine, could not broke nor digest him, for no other cause, but because he was a preacher of the gospel, an enemy to papistry, and a married man. Many devices were accompted against him for his confusion : sometimes by false suggestions ; sometimes by open railings and false libels ; sometimes by secret backbitings ; and in the end, practised his death by poisoning ; but, by the providence of God, the snares were broken and he delivered."—pp. 151—153.

In addition to the translation of the scriptures, Coverdale was author of numerous theological publications ; he also translated into English many of the writings of the continental reformers ; of which bibliographical notices are minutely detailed in our author's interesting Appendix. Throughout these multifarious productions, Coverdale, as a devoted christian philanthropist, breathed the spirit of ardent piety, sought the removal of existing abuses, and laboured to promote the best interests of his country ; nor can it be doubted, that his efforts were signally influential in advancing the great work of the Reformation. We assure our author that he could not have chosen

* Strype's Life of Cranmer, p. 382.

a subject more agreeable to our taste, or, upon the whole, have executed it more satisfactorily to our wishes; but, while we say this, it is matter of regret that we cannot give the work our unqualified approbation. The well informed reader must be a little startled at the outset, to find this honest, sturdy puritan styled "the right reverend father in God, sometime lord bishop of Exeter." He certainly was *sometime*, even nearly *two years*, bishop of that diocese; but, on the accession of Queen Mary, he was deprived and *unbishopsed*, for being a heretic. Having narrowly escaped the fire, he fled, and again became an exile in a foreign land; where, having associated with the continental reformers, his principles became more mature; his views of a christian church were brought much nearer to the model of the New Testament; and when, on the accession of Elizabeth, he returned to his native country, he did not forget or betray his principles. For though his bishopric was reserved for him, and he was repeatedly importuned to accept it, yet, listening to the voice of scripture and of conscience, he declined the offered promotion. On this occasion, his principles, and his worldly interest, were brought into open collision; yet he was at no loss to know how to act. His conscience not permitting him to conform to the new-modelled hierarchy of England, he spent many of his last years in preaching the gospel as he could, and in promoting greater purity in the worship of God, for which he was often censured by the patrons of superstition. He held, indeed, for a short time, the living of St. Magnus, near London bridge; but not coming up to the terms of conformity enjoined in queen Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity, he was forced to relinquish the benefice, and being driven from his flock, his grey hairs were brought with sorrow to the grave. In confirmation of these statements, we have the most satisfactory authorities; instead, therefore, of puffing off the old puritan with these popish titles, as if he were a genuine Anglican bishop, it would, we think, have approached quite as near the truth to have styled him "the learned and venerable Nonconformist, Myles Coverdale."

Our author has committed an oversight in styling Bonner, Bishop of Hereford, as if he had been actually settled in that see; whereas he was only "Lord elect of Hereford," having obtained a nomination, but before confirmation, he was appointed to the see of London. He also expresses strong doubt whether, on the accession of Mary, Coverdale was cast into prison; or, if he were, our author attests it could only be for a short time. We, on the contrary, have been accustomed to conclude, and, we think, from undoubted authority, that he was not only committed, but also that he remained in prison about fifteen months. Notwithstanding the favourable opinion we have expressed of these "Memorials," we cannot refrain from suspecting that their author cherishes some latent prejudice, if not something worse, against the learned and heroic leaders of the Reformation. He concludes his narrative by affirming, without attempting to prove the assertion, that the "spirit of fanaticism" was then exceedingly prevalent, and further, that the "stern, gloomy spirit of religion, bordering more or less on fanaticism, unfortunately

characterised most of the leading reformers of that day;" though he honourably exempts Coverdale from this grave accusation. Now on this point we are forced into open collision with our author; since, without evidence, we cannot believe that fanaticism constituted a prominent characteristic of the leading reformers. It is well known they were men of superior talents and of great acquirements—that "there were giants in those days;" and though having just emerged from the darkness and errors of popery, they had many important lessons to learn; yet, as the light of divine truth broke in upon their minds, they not only believed and practised the newly-discovered doctrines of holy writ, but they also defended them with an honest zeal and devoted firmness, the sincerity of which was proved by the many privations and sufferings they endured with unshaken faith and most rational calmness. Was this their fanaticism! O that the "stern spirit of religion," so conspicuous in them, were equally characteristic of our times. It might be stigmatized as fanaticism, or denounced as dangerous to church and state: yet, we think, it would tend, in no ordinary degree, not only to subvert formality and hypocrisy, profaneness and infidelity, but also to give energy and prosperity to the church of God, and diffuse peace and happiness throughout the community. This would enable learned prelates to see, that the absurd dogmas of socialism, with other erroneous principles, are to be suppressed, not by the sword of the magistrate, or the strong arm of the civil power, but by promoting the piety and intelligence of the people.

Although our author complains of his materials being scanty, yet he has discovered commendable industry and research, and has brought from obscurity the contents of many original documents, affording the reader high gratification. We wish that he had given not merely the substance of these, but had made a greater selection of their choicest passages, which would, in our opinion, have increased the value of the work. Other documents, equally interesting and curious, have escaped his notice, the use of which would have greatly contributed to improve the work. Should another edition be called for, which we hope may be very soon, we cheerfully direct the author's attention to these biographical remains.* Notwithstanding the defects we have noticed, the narrative is highly honourable to Coverdale, and creditable to the author; and, in conclusion, we cordially recommend the work to our readers, especially to those who wish to obtain an accurate acquaintance with the first translations of the Holy Scriptures which were penned in our mother tongue; its attentive perusal, we doubt not, will be equally gratifying and profitable.

* Lansdowne's MSS. Vol. vi. No. 85. vii. 60, 67.—Lambeth MSS. Vol. 959. No. 58.—Miscellaneous MSS. p. 122.—The last is a copy, and is deposited in Williams's Library, Redcross Street, London.

The Pleasures of Piety: a Poem in Ten Books. By the Rev. Robert Wilson, A.M., Greenock. Second Edition, revised and enlarged. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd. London: Hamilton and Co. 1840.

It was Gibbon who said that the genius of Milton was cramped by the system of our religion. The remark was worthy of an infidel—worthy of one whose soul felt nothing of the inspiration of true piety, and who was therefore constitutionally disabled from appreciating the grand and cheering truths of revelation. It is certain that, in the Book of God, there are richer stores of poetic material—more food for the contemplative mind—a wider field for the healthful exercise of the imagination, than in all other books besides. To say nothing of the “enthusiasm of poetry” in the descriptions of nature which you find in the “Song of Songs,” nor of the lofty imagery in connection with profoundly philosophical thinking, which abounds in the Book of Job; nor of the gorgeous dress in which the prophets have clothed so many of their predictions; to say nothing, in short, of the style in which the Bible is written, it is sufficient to observe that the truths it reveals, being of all truths the noblest, as well as the most extensively interesting, are of all truths the most worthy to be the theme of the poet’s song. It is a wretched error to suppose that the genius of Christianity is not suited to poetry. The streams of *Helicon* and *Pierus* supply a draught grateful only to those who have never tasted the richer and purer waters that flow from “the fountain of eternal love.” “If some passionate admirers of antiquity seem to lament the fall of paganism as fatal to poetry, to painting, and to sculpture, a more liberal and enlightened spirit of criticism may rather believe, what is very possible to demonstrate, that Christianity can hardly be more favourable to purity of morals, than it may be rendered to the perfection of these delightful arts.”*

Not the least pleasing characteristic of the present age, is that it manifests an increasing taste for religious poetry. The fact is to be taken as an evidence that pure and undefiled religion is at least not decreasing among the bulk of the people. That, in particular quarters, the taste is still fearfully vitiated, is, indeed, too evident to be denied; but, judging from a general survey of society, we should say that, in so far as taste for poetry may be taken as a criterion, matters are assuming a more favourable aspect. The moral feculence produced by the libidinous and profane writings of Ramsay, and Burns, and Byron, is beginning to work off, and a pure and healthy stream is found flowing in channels where lately nothing but polluted water was to be seen.

Among the religious poems which have recently issued from the press, few are so well calculated to gratify this increasing taste as “*The Pleasures of Piety*.” It is from the pen of a talented Scotch minister of the “United Secession Church”—a church which has produced several poets of no mean name. *Michael Bruce* and

* Hayley.

Robert Pollok are already well known to the lovers of religious poetry, and we are mistaken if the name of *Robert Wilson* is not destined to be equally celebrated. "*The Pleasures of Piety*" is a poem of no ordinary merit. It is of the school of Pollok, chastened by the pure and dignified spirit of Cowper. We have no extravagant flights of fancy, for against these the author has studiously guarded, yet it is impossible to read the poem without perceiving that the writer is a favourite with the Muses, and especially with her whom Tasso apostrophises in these beautiful lines:—

"O Musa, tu che di caduchi allori
Non circondi la fronte in Elicona
Ma su nel Cielo infra i beate chori
Hai di stelle immortali aurea corona."

Gier. lib. Cant. Prim. Stan. 2.

The plan of the poem is, in our opinion, exceedingly judicious. The poet has divided his work into ten books, each of which is devoted to a separate branch of the system of our religion. We can afford to give only a very few short extracts, and these we select not because we deem them the best specimens of the poem, but because they admit of being easily detached. In the first and second books our attention is called to the existence and character of God, the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and the pleasure to be derived from the pious contemplation of these important and interesting truths. In the third book the poet turns to the visible creation. "The common air, the earth, the skies," pass in review before him, and while his descriptions frequently remind us of Thomson in his happiest mode, the reflections are not unworthy of the author of the *Task*. Having "ushered in the Spring" with her "graceful leaves" and "glowing blossoms," he proceeds as follows:—

"'Twas in that gladsome season that I saw
The fair Emilia on her dying bed.
Around her mother's lonely cottage stood
Some aged elms, and through their flickering leaves,
The Sun's last ray play'd on her pallid cheek,
And sparkled on the chilly drops that stood
On her cold brow, thick as the evening dew
On the white roses, which in clusters hung
Around her open casement, where the breeze,
Effusive entering, with sweet odour fill'd
The little chamber where she dying lay.
Bright was her soft blue eye, and brighter still
It shone, as Death, with his dark pall, approach'd
More near; as the sweet modest star of eve
With growing lustre shines, while darksome night
Advances slowly; and, with lingering steps,
Day, down the mountains of the gorgeous west,
Withdraws reluctant. With untiring care,
And kindly looks of never-wearying love,
Her widowed mother watch'd beside her couch;
For all her youthful friends afar had fled,
And left her, as is left the stricken deer.
Yet mourn'd she not their absence; for she knew
Her great Redeemer liv'd, and now was near

To comfort her in death, when human aid
No longer could avail."

" From such a scene, 'tis sad to turn the eye
To the sick chamber, where the mother sits,
Close by the death-bed of her darling child,
Essaying, vainly, with some light romance,
Or trivial conversation, to allay
The agitations of a guilty soul,
Just hovering on eternity's dread brink,
And ready to be hurried to the bar—
The awful bar—of an offended God!
O, fatal sympathy! O, cruel care!
To cheat the dying with delusive dreams
Of health returning, when the mortal foe
Stands grimly by; and, with his icy hand,
Is stopping life's warm current at the heart,
And changing every feature of the face!

" But why such strange solicitude to veil
Both from your own, and from your children's view,
The future world? Has heaven for you no charms?
Has hell no terrors? Has the Lamb of God,
Now standing 'midst his Father's glorious Throne,
For you no winning aspect? Do your souls,
All cover'd o'er with sin's polluting stains,
Not need the virtue of his cleansing blood,
To wash them pure, that, unasham'd, they may
Appear before the presence of their God,
With joy exceeding; and for ever dwell
In heaven, with holy angels, and with souls
Of men redeem'd?"

The influence of religion in purifying the affections of the heart, forms the theme of the fourth book. The subject is not very fully treated, but such points as are adverted to are exceedingly well managed. The hollow friendships of the world are graphically exposed, and an affecting narrative, illustrating the power of religion in securing domestic happiness, is very felicitously introduced. The following is the reflection which the narrative suggests:—

" 'Tis thine, Religion, kindly to impart
A joy serene to the ingenuous mind
Of the poor labourer, while toiling hard
To earn with honesty his children's bread.
Sour Discontent, or bitter Envy, ne'er
Disturbs the pious hind. The honours all,
And high distinctions of this fleeting world,
To him appear like bubbles gay, which rise,
In quick succession, on the passing stream,
And, dancing for a moment, in the rays
Of the bright Sun, vanish quite,
As they had never been. The only wealth
Worth his ambition, in heaven's storehouse lies,
And, by the bounteous Maker of the world,
Thence offer'd freely to the sons of men;
Alike to him who lowly ploughs the soil,
And him who rules high on a regal throne."

In the fifth, sixth, and seventh books the poet descants on the pleasure derived from reading sacred narrative, embracing the history of the patriarchs, the captivity in Egypt, history of the Jews, and that of the New Testament particularly, as it bears on the character of Christ. Cowper has drawn a very impressive and powerful sketch of what a preacher should be. Our readers may compare Cowper's sketch with a somewhat similar one which occurs in Mr. Wilson's seventh book. The latter is drawn not from the character of Paul, but from that of our divine Redeemer. Mr. Wilson's description is longer and not quite so pointed, but it is more practical, and, in our opinion, does not suffer by the comparison. The effects of the gospel on men as individuals and as members of civil society, form the subject of the eighth book, while the last two, the ninth and tenth, are respectively devoted to a contemplation of the general resurrection, and the future residence of the just in heaven.

We cannot afford room for any more extracts. We cordially recommend the work to our readers. Those who are in the habit of giving presents to young people, whether in testimony of affection or as rewards of merit, will find "The Pleasures of Piety" well adapted to their purpose. It inculcates the great principles of genuine religion, announcing them in such language, and investing them with such imagery, as to render them at once striking and agreeable. It contains much true poetry, without any bombast. Perhaps its chief fault is, that the author, through fear of soaring beyond the bounds of sober imagination, has now and then plucked too many feathers from the wing of his muse. The first object of poetry, undoubtedly, is to please; and hence, where the ear is not gratified, nor the imagination appealed to, nor the sympathies of the heart awakened, there is no true poetry. At the same time it cannot be denied that harmonious numbers and splendid imagery are of little value, unless when used as the vehicles of instruction. We seldom find poets too exclusively didactic, but nothing is more common than to find them running into the opposite extreme. *Sir W. Scott*, for instance, whose poetical works are among the most popular in our language, cannot be said to have added much to our public virtue, and still less has he contributed to strengthen our religious principle. The reason is, that while he excels in describing external nature, or in unfolding the incidents of some moving tale, he almost totally avoids moral or didactic reflection. With the power of a magician he summons into our view the scenery and the inhabitants of Fairy-land, or spreads before us in living colours the wildest, the most varied, the most picturesque of old Scotland's landscapes. But all the while his sympathy is not with our moral or religious feelings. He speaks to our perceptions of the grand or the beautiful, of the chivalrous or the heroic, of the passionate or the tender, but he never calls into exercise our perception of spiritual things.

Here, indeed, is the advantage which religious poets will always possess over those who are conversant only with secular themes. The circumstance of its speaking to the heart and conscience must always give to didactic poetry, if not a more immediate, at least a

more lasting interest than is felt in that which is merely descriptive. The one is like a meteor which dazzles us for a moment, the other is like the steady light which guides and directs our steps. We are told by the greatest bard who ever wooed the muses, that poetic genius "is of power to inbreed and cherish in a great nation the seeds of virtue and public civility; to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in a right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's Almightyness."* It is a pity that such genius should ever be found departing from this its true province. It is especially a pity that it should ever be seen nursing the seeds of irreligion and lust. In such cases, besides having to regret the misapplication of a powerful engine, we have also to mourn the debasement of one of the noblest faculties of our intellectual being.

Jesus the Mercy Seat, or a Scriptural View of Atonement. By J. C. Means, Pastor of the General Baptist Church, Coles Street, London. London: Green, 12mo. pp. 224.

It has been remarked by Soame Jenyns, that so constantly and strongly is the doctrine of the atonement urged through every part of the New Testament, that he who can read those writings and deny its truth, might with as much reason read the works of Thucydides and Livy; and deny that any facts are there recorded relative to the histories of Greece or Rome. The observation came from the pen of a scholar, a philosopher and a layman, and we do not think it an extravagant one. The doctrine is not an inference which the fallible reason of men has deduced from certain statements in the sacred oracles; it has not been elicited by those niceties of criticism upon the received text which require an acquaintance with Greek syntax and idioms to be able to appreciate; but so unequivocally is it affirmed and repeatedly advanced on the page of revelation, that the very significancy of language is compromised by its rejection. The deniers of the atonement as a scriptural truth, reduce the Bible to a worse than Sybilline story, for the heathen pretenders to inspiration so contrived to word their announcements as to be fairly susceptible of different interpretations, whereas all the literalities of the sacred record are invaded and destroyed, if the death of Christ was not, as the document asserts in almost every variety of expression and phrase, an expiatory sacrifice for the sin of the world. Any assumption contrary to this stamps "Falsity" upon the words which holy men have written, renders "Deceiver" the befitting title of the self-devoted victim whose history they relate, while "Foolishness" becomes the proper superscription of the cross. Too much importance cannot be assigned to the view of "Jesus the Mercy Seat" as an object of faith. Besides the integrity of scripture as a truth-telling book, and its character as an intelligible writing being connected with it, the sentiment is maintained throughout its pages, that spiritual blessings can alone accrue to man through the channel of his media-

* Milton's Prose Works, vol. i. p. 121. Lond. 1806.

tion; and it is on this ground that we feel it imperative upon us to give the greeting of christian charity and fellowship to all who embrace the doctrine of his sacrificial death with a confidence enlightened and a trust sincere, however on other points we may differ from them; while, on the other hand, we deem it a duty which essential truth and the best interests of mankind demand of us, to "refrain from those men" who "deny the Lord that bought them," in all those acts of communion that would identify us with them. And though we may be charged with bigotry for saying this, we hold it to be a line of conduct necessary to preserve unimpaired to the apprehension of our fellows the eternal distinctions between truth and error; and gladly will we encounter the scorn of this world with Paul for declaring, "though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," if so be, that from the greater judgment of God we may receive the testimony, "thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

Apart from the scriptures, the evidence that may be adduced in favour of the scheme of atonement is partial and limited, but Bishop Butler has justly remarked, that the "reason of the thing, and the whole analogy of nature should teach us, not to expect to have the like information concerning the divine conduct, as concerning our duty. Still many considerations will present themselves to those who with a subdued and chastened spirit examine the subject, to show that the death of Christ as an expiation of the sins of men, is a gracious provision suitable to their case, and is in beautiful harmony with the principles and ends of moral government. It would be no difficult matter also to prove, that the theories which have been proposed in lieu of the christian doctrine, are unsupported by any abstract conclusions of reason, contradicted by every analogy of God's natural providence, and repudiated by the general sense and practice of mankind. The magistrate who administers the civil law, sees no abstract propriety in the remission of past infringements, on the ground of present repentance or prospective obedience: the every-day experience of human life tells us, that contrition has no power to stay the course of those natural evils that have been induced by folly and wickedness, nor reformation to remove the distresses that have been entailed by improvidence, and the sicknesses that are the fruit of vice; while the phenomenon of the prevalence of animal sacrifice, receives no satisfactory solution, save that which bases it upon a law which the finger of heaven has engraven on the heart of man, that "without shedding of blood is no remission." It may likewise be observed that the principle of mediation enters largely into the social polity among men, and is co-existent with the bounds of human society. The pleasures and the pains, the successes and the reverses which we experience, are so intimately interwoven with our mutual relations and dependance upon each other, that practically every man becomes in some degree a mediator to his fellow men, both for the communication of good, and the prevention or alleviation of evil. Nothing can be more strictly analagous to the constitution of things in real life, than the provision which the scriptures

make known, that mankind are to be saved not directly but through the intervention of another; and when we consider the moral ends which the voluntary abasement and unexampled sufferings of the "one Mediator" are adapted to answer, and how calculated the sacrifice of himself to expiate the guilt of rebellion, is to conserve or to restore the principle of allegiance to the divine government, we may justly and fearlessly claim for the doctrine in question the suffrages of every philosophical and enlightened intellect.

The volume before us is devoted to an examination of this momentous subject. It is small and unpretending, written in a devout spirit, and displays a becoming deference to the authority of scripture. The following is the table of contents:—Chap. I. The Doctrine of Atonement stated. II. The Authority of Scripture. III. Consistency of Atonement with the Divine Perfections. IV. Consistency of Atonement with the Scripture Doctrine of Forgiveness. V. VI. VII. VIII. Scriptural Evidence of Atonement. IX. Review of the Scriptural Evidence and general Considerations upon it. X. The personal Dignity of the Redeemer. XI. Practical Influence of the Doctrine of Atonement. At the close of the volume there is a series of notes and illustrations which are very creditable to the writer's theological knowledge, and critical acumen. From the annexed extract, taken at random, it will be seen that his style is as chaste as his sentiments are evangelical:—

*The Origin of Death.**

"On this subject Scripture is clear. That death was the penalty of sin, is affirmed, not only in the history of the fall, but in the apostolic writings, especially in Rom. v. and in that admirable chapter, 1 Cor. xv. It follows that Adam, previous to his sin, was immortal; whether by the constitution of his nature, or by perpetual access to the means of sustaining vital energy unimpaired, it is in vain to inquire. The latter may be conjectured from Gen. ii. 9; iii. 22; but it can be no more than conjectured. In what way man would have been removed from the earth, we cannot tell; we know from the cases of Enoch and Elijah that death is not essential to such removal. But that removal would, in course of time, have become necessary from the increase of population, is clear, however we may be in the dark as to the manner in which it would have been effected.

"The rejection of the scriptural account of the origin of death, by those who profess to receive the Scriptures, is hard to be accounted for; especially as the opposite opinion rests on mere assumption. That our present frame is mortal, there is no doubt; but that it was so at its first creation is entirely destitute of proof. The fact that death under our present circumstances comes as a relief, only shows that God has adapted our circumstances to our constitution; and the infirmities which make us look for death as a relief, are themselves part of the penalty to which we have become subject.

"Our present constitution, far from impugning the scriptural statement, appears, when regarded as a whole, to corroborate it. The change which took place at the fall, seems to have been simply a change in our physical constitution, a change, that is, from immortality to mortality: it operated upon our intellectual and moral constitution, only so far as these depend upon our physical constitution, or are affected by it. The fall brought the faculties and affections and desires of a soul created for immortality into connexion with a frail and perishing body. And this is the state in which we behold man now. Contemplated as an intellectual and moral being, every thing indicates his

original destiny to an endless life. The existence in every breast of the religious principle, however misdirected by ignorance or perverseness, or however overborne by worldliness or vice; the unquenchable and universal expectation of an hereafter; the absence of any recognised limits to the capacity for knowledge, and the capability of improvement;—all manifest the design with which man was originally formed. Yet this wondrous nature is lodged in a perishable frame, which, if it avoids disastrous accidents and escapes disease, wears out by natural decay before it has passed through the revolution of a century.

“In this anomalous connection of the immortal with the mortal, we discern a perpetual memorial of the penal sentence, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

“This sentence, as passed upon Adam, and in him upon his posterity, was that of death without limit, and, unless by a future divine interposition, without remedy. It closed man’s existence: and, but for the redemption by Christ Jesus, would have closed it finally and eternally. The divine dispensations before the gospel regard him as an inhabitant of earth alone. Their sanctions, whether of reward or punishment, relate to the present state; and they lead us not to futurity, except it be by reference to the great deliverer who was to come. Holy men, like David, arguing from what they knew of the divine character, and speaking from the prompting of the immortal spirit within them, expressed their hope and confident expectation of a future life; but there is not a promise of immortality in the writings of the Old Testament, except so far as it is involved in the promise of a Redeemer. Our Lord himself, when reasoning with the Sadducees, brought no other argument than this, that God had given himself a name, which would have been inappropriate, had not all lived unto him, to whose sight the future as well as the past is ever present.

“It is from this entire and conclusive extinction of being that our Lord has redeemed us. *By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* We die, indeed, but death has lost its sting. Our rest in the grave is but the temporary repose, which prepares for the duties and joys of an endless day. Perhaps this temporary death may have been left as a memorial of the fall, a warning of the awful consequences of transgression. It reminds us that our immortality is not the earning of our own deeds, but the gift of divine grace. It introduces to the judgment-seat, that the validity of our claim to the grace which is by Jesus Christ may be examined. The innocent may go unquestioned and untied; but the pardoned transgressor must appear at the bar, if it is only to plead the king’s forgiveness and release.

“How those who deny death to be the consequence of Adam’s sin can explain such passages as that quoted above, it is hard to conceive. Some argue, that what we have by Adam is the knowledge of death; and what we have by Christ the knowledge of immortality. But not only is this hypothesis inconsistent with the apostle’s statement, for he mentions the things themselves, and not the mere knowledge of them, which is altogether a different thing; but it is contrary to fact; for the first experimental acquaintance of man with death was neither in the person of Adam, nor immediately by any act of his. Abel was the first whose death is recorded, and he fell by the hand of Cain, long before Adam’s decease.

“So clear and decided is the apostle’s declaration, that it can only be set aside by impugning his accuracy: which is accordingly done by Mr. Belsham in his translation and paraphrase of the Epistles of Paul. This no doubt removes the difficulty; whether in a way consistent with the reverence due to the inspired teachers of Christianity, or compatible with the general authority of the Scriptures, is altogether another question.

“The redemption which we have by Christ does more than remove the penalty of Adam’s guilt. That removal would have only placed us under the same covenant as that under which Adam fell, and, like him, we should soon have fallen. In the gospel dispensation the forgiveness of our own offences is secured

to us upon faith and repentance. *The judgment was by one (offence) to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.*

"Those who disregard the invitations of the divine mercy, and refuse to comply with the conditions on which pardon is offered, namely faith and repentance, revert to that state of condemnation from which it was designed to deliver them; and become subject to the second death. By what means this death will be brought about we know not. The declarations of Scripture are most awful, and accord with the nature and reason of the case, in assuring as that this self-incurred ruin will be without remedy and without hope."—pp. 175—179.

There are several circumstances connected with this volume of an interesting nature.

1. Mr. Means styles himself, on the title-page, "Pastor of the General Baptist Church, Coles Street, London." Our readers in the midland counties, and in other parts of the kingdom, who are only acquainted with the New Connexion of General Baptists, will feel no surprise at one under the above designation arguing in favour of the atonement. But the present writer belonged to the Old Connexion—a denomination which departed from the "apostle's doctrine" along with the old Presbyterians, and which has been dragging on an enfeebled existence under the injurious influence of Socinian dogmas. The views entertained by this body, or, as it may more correctly be styled, the lifeless fragment of a body, are, therefore, diametrically opposed to those embraced and advocated by Mr. Means with reference to the death of Christ. The event which he regards as a true propitiation, is nothing more in their apprehensions than a proof of sincerity and love on the part of a human teacher, illustrating his undoubted confidence in the truth of the doctrines he had delivered by the surrender of his life. Such, too, was the early imbibed opinion of Mr. Means; he tells us that he did not attach any efficacy to the "decease at Jerusalem" in atoning for sin, though he could not satisfy himself as to the meaning of many passages of Scripture which refer to it; he viewed it simply as an evidence of the truthfulness of the sufferer, and an important preliminary to his resurrection, on which the belief of the gospel mainly rests. But his opinions have undergone that material change which his present publication indicates; a change for which he cannot be charged with capriciousness or haste, as his work displays a diligent course of theological inquiry; and it is a proof of the honesty of his convictions and the integrity of his character, that he has since resigned his office as pastor of the General Baptist Church, Coles Street. Entertaining the views we do of the importance of the doctrine of the atonement, we cannot be indifferent to the adhesion of any mind to it, after wandering in regions remote from a perception of its truth; and it gives us pleasure to find that, in this case, the homage of the intellect to an orthodox sentiment has been connected with the trust of the heart in it as the only source of ennobling and sanctifying influence.

2. The change of opinion adverted to has been produced by a candid examination of the Scriptures, and a becoming deference to their authority. This, we maintain, is the legitimate effect of treating the Bible as an inspired document, and fairly interpreting its meaning. Hence those who have rejected the atonement have been

compelled to take greater liberties with the letter of the sacred page than ever the "slashing Bentley" did with heathen Greek, and to lay aside its inspiration and consequent supreme authority. They have tried more to ascertain what the words of Scripture may mean, than what they actually do mean; they have sat as judges upon the merits of the testimony, and not as devout exponents of its significance; they have thus made void the law, and substituted their own imaginations in its place. Mr. Martineau thus states the regard which, in his opinion, should be paid to the announcements of holy writ:—"Our own reason steps in and intreats to have a voice in the decision; it urges us not to adopt any theory about Christ's mission which does violence to the conclusions it has already drawn from other quarters; it begs to preserve entire its own faith and to hold every interpretation of this history false which cannot consist with it." Now, if this process of stepping in, intreating, urging, and begging, is to be allowed to pass current, where are we? but set afloat at once upon an ocean of endless speculation without any trustworthy pilot to steer our course to a secure and peaceful haven. One man's reason may reject this scripture doctrine, and another man's that fact, and a third's this precept, until all the foundations of our faith and practice are removed by the general licence granted to believe or disbelieve, every object of religious hope, trust, and joy vanishes, life becomes once more a span of being without any definite aim in view, and death the awful threshold to an unexplored and dark eternity. The men who thus deal with divine truth, virtually strip it of all divinity, and reduce it to the level of their own imperfect and fallible conceptions. But let the point be settled that the Bible contains the writings of inspired men, and then both the doctrinal and ethical contents of the book have a stamp of supreme authority, which demands for them that prompt and reverent reception which is due to an infallible record, and which summonses human reason from the throne of judgment to sit at the feet of a teacher wiser than herself. In this way Mr. Means has argued and acted with reference to the particular point upon which he writes; adopting the principle that the Scripture is the only sure guide in the formation of religious opinion, he applied himself to a careful investigation of its meaning; and the result has been the abandonment of some of his former views, and a conviction of the truth of the atonement.

3. In briefly adverting to that process of change through which his mind has passed, Mr. Means acknowledges his obligations to various writers, whose works contributed to relieve those perplexities with which all enquiries after truth are in some degree connected. Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity led him to the conclusion that death was the penalty of sin, and that redemption included not only the communication of a clearer knowledge of futurity, but also the restoration of that eternal life forfeited by the first act of transgression. But the work which appears to have rendered him the most important aid, and of which he makes honourable mention, is the "Christian Atonement," by the Rev. Joseph Gilbert, of Nottingham, which formed the Congregational Lecture for the year 1835. He consulted it in order to acquire a correct conception of that view

of atonement commonly held by the orthodox dissenters; it dispelled the prejudices which the inconsiderate expressions of some of our old writers had occasioned, and of which our Socinian opponents have not been slow to avail themselves; while it promoted a correct apprehension of the important position which the doctrine of Christ's expiatory death holds in the economy of the divine government. Mr. Gilbert's volume, which ought to be, if it is not, in its second edition, has been noticed in our pages, but we may embrace the opportunity now afforded of again commending it to the careful perusal of our readers, and especially of students in theology. It bears the impress of an acute, comprehensive, and far-seeing mind; it has contributed to correct the erroneous impressions concerning the atonement which the severe spirit of some of the puritans put into circulation, and which expressions in several of our devotional hymns introduced to give point and antithesis to the poetry have perpetuated; it has been read with interest and approbation, we have reason to know, by some of the finest philosophical minds of the present day, and has found its way into circles where the productions of congregational divines are seldom allowed to penetrate; and the testimony borne to its utility in the case before us, must be alike gratifying to Mr. Gilbert and to the founders and patrons of the Congregational Lecture.

4. The views which Mr. Means expresses as to the personal dignity of the Redeemer, appear to us to be very defective. He still maintains the sole deity of the Father, admits the pre-existence of Christ, and assigns to him a nature originally immortal, with a communication of knowledge, wisdom, and power all but unbounded. Those in the present day who disclaim the essential divinity of our Lord, are in general equally adverse to the fact of his atonement; but Mr. Means, in holding to the latter unconnected with the former, vindicates himself from the charge of intellectual peculiarity by referring to the examples of Locke and Milton. He believes that the connexion between the two is continually "taken for granted both by advocates and opponents;" and labours to show that no such connexion is necessary. Now, whatever "opponents" may think, we as "advocates" of both doctrines, honestly acknowledge that we do "take for granted" a connexion between them, because we cannot understand the scriptures in any other sense than as constantly affirming that the atonement was accomplished by an essentially divine person. But if Mr. Means supposes that by a process of abstract reasoning, we come in the first instance to the conclusion, that the work of atonement must be wrought by a divine person, and then interpret scripture so as to favour that hypothesis, he is utterly mistaken. We respectfully submit to him that all his arguments to show that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is not necessary as an adjunct to the atonement are widely beside the mark, because, upon his own principle of the scripture being our safest guide in religious opinion, the point to be determined is not what we conceive to be fitting, but what the record vouches to be truth. We have read with care the chapter devoted to the consideration of the Redeemer's personal dignity, and we surmise that the writer has not submitted his judgment to the same infallible guide upon this subject, as that by which his enquiries were directed respecting the atone-

ment—at least there is no evidence of any attempt to ascertain the scripture testimony to the person of Christ. We would fain hope, therefore, that as one in the quest of truth, he has directed his intelligent mind to a sober and candid examination of the statements of the sacred volume upon this point, and that ere long he will agree with us in holding as part of the mystery of godliness, “God manifest in the flesh.”

THE EDITOR'S TABLE.

The New Commandment, or the Christian's Test. London: L. and G. Seeley.

The Sacred Melodist. A Collection of Hymns and Melodies. By Philip Dixon Hardy, M.R.I.A. Dublin: Hardy and Walker. London: R. Groombridge.

The Holy Wells of Ireland, containing an authentic Account of those various Places of Pilgrimage and Penance, with a minute Description of the Patterns and Stations. London: L. and G. Groombridge.

Religion and Education in America, with Notices of the State and Prospects of American Unitarianism, Popery, and African Colonization. By John Dunmore Lang, D.D. London: Ward and Co.

The History of Nelly Vanner, who died April 26th, 1839, aged Ten Years. By John Curwen. Second edition. London: Ward and Co.

A Practical Commentary, or an Exposition, with Notes, on the Epistle of James. By the Rev. T. Manton, D.D. London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co.

Religion, in Connexion with a National System of Introduction. By W. M. Gunn. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.

The Works of Josephus. Translated by W. Whiston. Part V. London: George Virtue.

Popular Airs and Sacred Melodies, adapted for social Singing. London: R. Groombridge.

Canadian Scenery, illustrated from Drawings, by W. H. Bartlett. London: George Virtue.

Humility Recommended, an Address to the Students of Airedale College, delivered at the Anniversary Meeting held on Wednesday, June 24th, 1840. By the Rev. John Kelly, of Liverpool. London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co.

The Philosophy of Christianity, or the Genuine Christian. By Philip Dixon Hardy, M.R.I.A. London: Ball, Arnold, and Co.

The Mineralogy and Botany of the Bible. By E. F. C. Rosenmüller. The Biblical Cabinet. Vol. XXVII. Edinburgh: Thomas Clark.

The Colonial Magazine and Commercial Maritime Journal. No. 9. Edited by Robert Montgomery Martin, Esq. London: Fisher, Son and Co.

Howard and Napoleon contrasted, in Eight Dialogues between Two Young Americans. London: Houlston and Stoneman.

An Examination of Socialism, the last of a Course of Lectures against Socialism, delivered in the Mechanics' Institution by the Rev. Robert Ainslie. London: L. and G. Seeley.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

Dr. Henderson's Commentary on Isaiah will appear on the 15th instant.

Shortly will be published, by Messrs. Ball and Co., *The Church at Work*: an Essay on the best means of promoting the increase of places of worship, of Congregational hearers, and of members in church fellowship: by Edward Leighton.

In the Press, *The Congregational Lecture for 1840*; subject—*The Connexion and Doctrinal Harmony of the Old and New Testaments*. By the Rev. W. Lindsay Alexander, M.A. of Edinburgh.

Just published, a second edition, in foolscap 8vo. of *Dr. Pye Smith on the Relation between the Holy Scriptures and some Parts of Geological Science*.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES, AT HOME AND ABROAD.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AUTUMNAL MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES, AND OF THE HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY IN CONNEXION.

These important services are to be held, D.V. in Bristol, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, the 6th, 7th, and 8th days of October.

The following arrangements for conducting them have been agreed upon:—

On Tuesday evening, the 6th of October, a preparatory devotional meeting will be held in Bridge-street Chapel, the Rev. H. I. Roper's, to commence at seven o'clock. At this preliminary meeting short addresses will be given, explanatory of the nature and design of the whole procedure, by the Rev. J. Blackburn, on behalf of the Congregational Union, and by the Rev. Dr. Matheson, on behalf of the Home Missionary Society.

The forenoons of Wednesday, the 7th, and Thursday, the 8th of October, will be devoted to meetings of the delegates of the two Societies, to commence at nine o'clock. On each day the meeting will adjourn for refreshment precisely at three o'clock. In these meetings the Rev. Dr. Bennett will preside. Papers have been prepared for their consideration on the following important subjects:—1. *The home missionary duties of churches, and the best arrangements for their successful performance.* 2. *Hints for the improvement of the constitution and efficiency of associations.* 3. *The want of a greatly increased number of able ministers, in connexion with the Independent churches and with their British missions, and the best means of supplying that want.* 4. *The education of home missionaries.* 5. *The most effectual plans for supporting British missions in connexion with the Congregational Union.* Any ministers, or brethren in church fellowship, will be welcomed as visitors at these meetings, though not delegated.

On the Wednesday evening a sermon will be preached in the Tabernacle, by the Rev. WILLIAM JAY, of Bath; worship to commence at half-past six o'clock.

On the Thursday evening, a public meeting, specially devoted to the Home Missionary object, will be held in Castle Green Chapel, the Rev. J. Jack's. EDWARD BAINES, Esq. M.P. for Leeds, will take the chair at half-past six o'clock.

On their arrival at Bristol, ministers must apply for cards of introduction to the friends by whom they will be entertained, to Mr. John Smith, hosier, 6, Wine-street, by whom they will also be furnished with printed copies of the documents prepared by the Committees for the consideration of the meetings of delegates. If any ministers intending to be present at Bristol, and desiring accommodation while there, have not yet apprised the Rev. J. Jack, 28, King-square, of their intention, *it is earnestly requested that they will do this immediately.*

The Committees engaged in preparation for these meetings ask the prayers of their brethren, that all the proceedings connected with them may be guided and crowned with the Divine blessing.

BRITISH MISSIONS, IN CONNEXION WITH THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

ENGLAND—IRELAND—AND THE COLONIES.

The Committee of the Congregational Union are most anxious to call forth the efforts of the denomination for the religious interests of the British people.

Three Institutions, the Home and Colonial Missionary Societies, and the Irish Evangelical Society, labouring respectively for three important divisions of the empire, have been placed in connexion with the Union, that its utmost influence may be employed on their behalf. They all greatly need pecuniary aid.

The several Committees of those Societies will urge their respective claims on the attention and liberality of the churches. The Committee of the Union will plead for them all.

It has done so. An Appeal on behalf of British Missions has been put forth by the Committee of the Union. It has been published by Jackson and Walford, 18, St. Paul's Church Yard, at five shillings per hundred for distribution. The Committee request their friends to give it a wide circulation.

The practical point in that address, is to propose a general collection in all the churches for British Missions, simultaneously, on the last Lord's-day in October. The Committee already know that many churches will so collect. Let this practice once be established, and become general, every pastor pleading with his own people for his own country once every year, and great results will follow.

British Missions are at this juncture the especial duty of the British churches.

The animating letter that follows, will show with how cordial and devout a spirit this appeal has been received by one honoured brother. It is published to aid, as it is eminently adapted to do, in producing and extending the right spirit among our churches and pastors in reference to British Missions. What might not the Independent churches accomplish for England, for Ireland, and for the Colonies, were they and their ministers all imbued with the holy ardour and liberality breathed in this encouraging communication !

" Ashton-under-Lyne, Sept. 14th, 1840.

" MY DEAR SIR,—Your faithful and affectionate appeal on behalf of 'British Missions,' has reached our hearts, and I am instructed by the church and congregation of which I am pastor, to assure you of their cordial concurrence and support. After having read the letter myself, and imbibed, I trust, its spirit, I forwarded it to a number of my friends, who also felt and acknowledged its powerful and heart-stirring appeals. Sensible of the importance of the object, and alive, in some measure, to our obligations, we brought the matter before the church, and a resolution was unanimously passed, pledging an annual collection in the month of October, together with subscriptions and other contributions; the amount to be distributed in such proportions as may be judged best, for England, for Ireland, and the Colonies. The way is now open for you; a very lively interest is excited, and if you will only oblige us by sending a deputation, and that as soon as you please, I can promise a welcome reception and liberal contributions. I sincerely hope that the excellent letter addressed by Mr. James to the Directors of the respective Societies now happily associated with the Congregational Union, will be productive of the desired and the best results. They are, I trust, prepared for vigorous efforts; and while they adopt measures in harmony with the advancing intelligence and wants of the age, let them invite extensive co-operation, undertake bold enterprises, and provoke, by their own example, the whole denomination to love and good works. Let them appeal again and again to the churches throughout the length and the breadth of the land, and never suffer them to rest till they are pledged to the cause. Let them lead on, and others will follow. Cæsar in extending his conquests and triumphs, never said to his men, 'go,' but 'come.' I would also take the liberty of suggesting to the Secretaries the importance of a still wider circulation of their most admirable letter, now printed in the form of a tract. There is something, if I mistake not, in that address, which cannot fail to tell on christian hearts, and prompt to decisive efforts. Be of good courage, my brother; brightening prospects are open before you. I pray that you may advance and move triumphantly onward. God is disposing the hearts of his people to aid you, and that generously; and your great, good work will, I feel assured, by his blessing, go on and prosper.

" I remain, my dear Sir, your's most affectionately,

" J. SUTCLIFFE."

" To the Rev. Algernon Wells."

COLONIAL CHURCHES—NEW INDEPENDENT CHAPEL, GREEN PONDS,
VAN DIEMAN'S LAND.

A neat and substantial place of worship, erected at this township, (which is about 30 miles from Hobart Town,) was opened for public service on the 17th April, 1840.

A prayer meeting was held in the above place early in the morning, and then, for the first time, the voice of prayer and praise ascended from this hill of Zion.

At eleven, the more public services commenced.—The Rev. A. Morrison read the Scriptures and engaged in prayer; the Rev. F. Miller preached to a numerous and attentive audience from Psalm lxxiv. 22, "Arise, O God, plead thine own cause."

In the afternoon, the Rev. J. Beazley commenced the services, and the Rev. A. Morrison preached from Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2, "Thus saith the Lord," &c.

In the evening, the Rev. F. Miller commenced, and the Rev. J. Beazley preached from John v. 39, "Search the Scriptures."

At the conclusion of the sermon, Mr. Beazley stated that the total expense of the building, when completed, would be £500; that upwards of £400 had been raised by voluntary contributions; and that, for his own part, the collection of these funds had been a pleasing duty, from the willingness with which the contributions had been offered.

On the following Sabbath, two sermons were preached by the Rev. J. Nisbet; in the afternoon, from Acts xiv. 7, "And there they preached the Gospel." In the evening from John iii. 3, "Except a man be born again," &c. The collections on this and the day of opening amounted to £65 14s. 4d.

The prospects in this place are most encouraging. Mr. Beazley commenced his labours here about two years ago; he has since made it his central station. The room first occupied, soon became too small for the increasing congregation; more ample accommodation was provided by the erection of a new school-room; that also became insufficient to contain the people assembling; they then came forward liberally to provide a suitable place of worship. In this they were assisted by christian friends in various parts of the Colony, and the present commodious edifice is the result of their exertions.

The dimensions of the chapel are 40 feet by 30; it is built of stone, and will seat about 220 persons.

"Establish thou the work of our hands upon us, O God: yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF THE NEW CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
AT QUEBEC.

The members of the Congregational church in this city, having acquired a site of ground at the corner of Palace and St. Helen Streets, belonging to H. Atkinson, Esq. the buildings on which were some time ago consumed by fire, have commenced erecting a church thereon, the foundation-stone of which was laid on the evening of Wednesday, the 29th July.

The service commenced by singing part of the 179th Hymn in the Congregational Hymn Book, "This stone to thee in faith we lay, &c." The foundation-stone was laid, in which was deposited British and American coins, a copy of "the Declaration of Faith and Church Order of the Independent or Congregational Christians," together with a few other publications; and the following statement written on vellum.

"The Congregational church in Quebec, in connection with the Colonial Missionary Society, was formed in February, 1838, and for a time worshipped in a room in Palace Street, at the corner of St. Helen Street. The increase of the Congregation rendered a removal necessary, and a building at the upper end of the Market Place, opposite the Cathedral, was procured and fitted up; and on the 29th of July the foundation-stone of this church was laid by the

Rev. T. Atkinson, Pastor, in the presence of many of the church and congregation."

To which was added the names of the Trustees and the builders, and the hope was expressed that the few coins would prove emblematical of the united liberality of the British and American churches.

The church will be 56 feet by 57, and the basement story will be appropriated to school-rooms and a keeper's house. The whole is to be completed by the end of April next.

The Rev. T. Atkinson then delivered the following address:—

"My christian Friends,—Through the goodness of Divine Providence we have reached an era in our history as a church and congregation which invites us gratefully to review the past, and cheerfully to anticipate the future. A few now present can look back to our early meetings in the building opposite, and tracing the steps that have since been taken, and surveying our present position and future prospects, we are led to exclaim, with mingled emotions of gratitude and hope, 'The Lord hath been mindful of us:—he will bless us.'

"It is usual to lay the foundation-stone of a public building, intended to advance the cause of benevolence, of knowledge, or of religion, with some ceremony calculated to attach importance to the undertaking, to diffuse information, and to excite an interest respecting it. And when there is any peculiarity in the principles upon which such a movement proceeds, it is universally acknowledged that an explicit avowal of those principles is due alike to those who conduct it, and to the public, who are immediately or more remotely interested in it. And as we are assembled to lay the foundation of a building 'in which the pure word of God shall be preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinances,' it has been thought desirable and becoming to accompany this act, not only with prayer for the Divine blessing, but with a candid and christian avowal of our peculiar principles, and the objects we contemplate.

"First of all, let it be distinctly understood, that we do not by this act, set ourselves in unfriendly opposition to any of the existing religious communities. So far as they are seeking to promote, and are calculated to secure the glory of God and the well-being of man, we 'bid them God speed,' and would most cordially co-operate with them in every practicable way. But there are modes of worship, and means of personal improvement and relative usefulness, to which we are conscientiously attached, which we can secure and enjoy, only by a distinct and separate organization:—and while we thus provide for ourselves the ordinances and institutions in which some of us were reared in the land of our fathers, we hope to bring additional and powerful influences to bear upon that portion of the community, (and how large a portion?) still living in the neglect of the instituted means of salvation.

"Our doctrinal sentiments are in general those of the English, Scotch, and Dutch reformed churches.—We believe that the Scriptures of the Old Testament as received by the Jews, and the books of the New Testament as received by the primitive Christians from the Evangelists and Apostles, are divinely inspired, and form the only standard of appeal in matters of faith and practice,—that there is ONE GOD, infinitely wise, holy, just, and good;—the Creator and supporter, the Governor and Judge of all;—that He is revealed in the Scriptures as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that to each are attributed the same divine properties and perfections;—that man was created in the image of God; that he disobeyed the divine command; fell from his state of innocence and purity, and involved all his posterity in the consequences of his fall; that therefore all mankind are born in sin, with an inclination to moral evil utterly incurable by human means;—that the plan of man's salvation originated in the free and sovereign love of God the Father, was effected by the obedience, and death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is applied by the Holy Spirit, whose influence is indispensably necessary to bring a sinner to true repentance; to produce saving faith; to regenerate the heart, and to effect our sanctification;—that we are jus-

tified through faith in Christ as 'the Lord our righteousness,' and not 'by the works of the law;'—that a holy life will be the necessary effect of true faith, and that good works are the certain fruits of a vital union to Christ;—that the Lord Jesus directed his followers to live together in christian fellowship, and to maintain the communion of saints, and that for this purpose they are unitedly to observe all divine ordinances, and to maintain that church order and discipline which is either expressly enjoined in the word of God, or fairly deducible from the practice of the Apostles and Apostolic churches.

"Upon this point, (our distinctive principles of church order and discipline) while I wish to be brief, I am anxious to be *explicit*,—because it is here that we differ from existing bodies of Christians in this city; and *because our principles are not generally understood*. That I may secure this brevity and explicitness, without fear of giving offence or pain to those who hold other sentiments, I shall extract what I have to say upon this subject from the 'Declaration of Faith and Church order,' published by the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

Mr. Atkinson, having read the principles of Church order contained in the Declaration, proceeded as follows:—

"These, be it observed, are *not speculative and inoperative opinions*, but *moving and controlling principles*,—they are not weapons of polemic strife, but the implements of heavenly warfare,—by the vigilant and prayerful use of which the kingdom of Satan is to be destroyed, and the reign of Christ perfected in ourselves and in the world. Our grand object as a church is to give a faithful and practical exhibition of the religion of heaven—to preserve the stream of truth clear and pure as it flows from the fountain of life, that its refreshing and life-giving powers may be known and enjoyed by the thirsty and perishing:—to keep the sacred flame of knowledge and love, bright and flowing, that the dark may be enlightened, the wanderer reclaimed, and all blessed.

"The church and congregation to assemble here, will, therefore, be free from all secular and worldly control, that undivided allegiance may be rendered to Christ,—we shall be *independent of* all, that we may be *dependent in* all, upon the word and blessing of our Lord. We choose to be free from human dictation; from the rules of any party founder, and from the definition of formularies, that we may be free to admit to our communion *all* who love the Lord Jesus, and to our pulpits, all who preach 'Christ and him crucified;' in short, that we may be 'built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.'

"In conclusion, let me observe, we are laying down no *new* system;—we are not putting forth *untried opinions*;—our principles have been long and severely *tested*:—their worth and power have been manifested by the experience of ages, and never, since the beginning of the gospel dispensation, was there a time in which they spread more rapidly than at present. In England, and in America, they are exerting a most powerful influence, an influence that must tell upon the destinies of the world—and we doubt not that, with the growth of liberty, and the dissemination of knowledge, they will be more generally appreciated and embraced.

"But confident as we are of the success, the ultimate triumph, of our principles; we are free to confess, that if *this* church maintain its ground, and extend its influence, it can only be by the holiness and zeal, the liberality and prayerfulness of our people. It has no other resources:—and we rejoice that it has not:—for if it have *not* these, the sooner it become *extinct* the better! Yes! better have no church, than a church recreant to her heavenly principles! Better have no beacon, than one which shall exhibit an uncertain and deceitful light! But if it *have* these, it possesses the essential elements of real strength. Do you want *proofs* of this? Behold these proofs in what has already been accomplished for us, and by us, few and feeble as we are. *These very foundations are solid proofs!* They are built, *not* by the public treasury;—not by supplies wrung from a reluctant people by *compulsion*,—but by the *free-will offerings*

of a people, whose heart the Lord hath prepared for the work. I say it not in boasting, but I do say with grateful triumph,—the life and power of our principles are evident in this undertaking. And, my brethren, this is not the *only*, or the most important, building which is going up amongst us:—God is rearing a *spiritual* temple;—of *regenerated, living men!* and the erection of this material building will, we trust, be the means of carrying on *that* work with greater speed and solidity. And if, while surveying what *has* been done, we must say, the Lord hath been mindful of us; we can with cheerful hope anticipate the future, rejoicing that “He *will* bless us,” and bless us abundantly. Ere long we hope to be permitted to assemble within these walls, to set apart the house for the purpose of proclaiming the word of God. Then may it be filled with his glory! Here may the young be instructed in the principles of the religion of Christ! Here may sinners listen with eager stillness to the sound of heavenly mercy! Here may many “*living stones*” be hewn out from nature’s quarry, to compose part of that spiritual temple which shall remain the everlasting monument of divine wisdom, power, and love!

“Suffer me to urge upon you the important inquiry—Are *you* the subjects of that divine and necessary change to which we have referred?—Have *you* been made ‘alive unto God through Jesus Christ?’—Are *you* thus constituted the ‘temples of the Holy Spirit?’—Oh! that you may all be prepared by divine grace to serve God on earth, and to dwell for ever in the temple of his glory!”

We beg to solicit, on behalf of his bold effort, the liberal contributions of our friends.

RESOLUTION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL BOARD RESPECTING DISSIDENT REGISTERERS.

In consequence of the passing of a recent Act of Parliament, by which non-parochial registers are (after examination by the Commissioners) made receivable as evidence in courts of justice, the registers of births and baptisms, which, for nearly a century, have been kept by the Dissenting deputies of London at Dr. Williams’s Library, in Red Cross Street, have been removed from thence, and are now deposited with the Registration Commissioners, Rolls Yard, Chancery Lane. As the Commissioners are empowered to receive (at any time previous to the 9th of November,) any non-parochial registers of births or baptisms, deaths, burials, or marriages, that may be in the hands of congregations or of private individuals, and are directed by that Act to deposit in the General Registry Office all such registers as they may find to be accurate and faithful, it is highly important to the interests of many, that every private person, and the trustees of every congregation that may still have a register book in their custody, should transmit the same to the Commissioners without delay, as the withholding any from their inspection will deprive them of the benefit of being received as *legal evidence* in the courts, and will greatly diminish their present value, by raising a suspicion as to their genuineness and authenticity.

Besides recording this judicious proceeding of the Deputies, we also publish the following resolution of the Congregational Board, at its last meeting, Tuesday, Sept. 15th, and hope that the united judgment of the Board and of the Deputies, will influence every church that has not yet availed itself of this most important arrangement, to act upon it without delay.

“Resolved—That as an Act was passed during the last session of Parliament, with the view of giving a legal character to the register of births, baptisms, deaths or burials, and marriages, not being parochial; this Board would strongly recommend the Dissenters generally, and churches of the Congregational denomination in particular, who have not already sent their registers, to transmit them *immediately* to the Commissioners of the non-parochial Registration Commission, in order to secure the important benefits conferred by this Act, as all registers not received on or before the ninth day of November next, will be *entirely excluded* from the advantages this Act is intended to afford.”

We also beg to remind our readers, that as the franking of parcels for Government is now abolished, the registers cannot be sent through the Post Office gratuitously, but must be forwarded, free of all cost, to S. Burns, Esq., Secretary of the Non-parochial Registration Commission, Rolls Yard, Chancery Lane, London.

INCORPORATION OF HIGHBURY AND HOMERTON COLLEGES WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

The charter, which was granted to the University of London at the commencement of the present reign, gave to the students educated at University College and King's College, and *such other institutions as her Majesty, her heirs and successors should hereafter authorize*, the privilege of being admitted as candidates for the degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Bachelor of Laws, and Doctor of Laws. In consequence of the opportunity hereby afforded, several long established academical institutions, and amongst others, Highbury and Homerton Colleges, have applied for this privilege, which has been liberally granted by the present Government. Students for the dissenting ministry, educated at these two colleges, will therefore now have an opportunity of obtaining those honorary distinctions for learning, which have hitherto been confined in this country to members of the Established Church. We rejoice that the committees of these colleges have taken this important step; and we trust that their example will be followed by our other colleges, as the circumstances of the times are such as to demand among us men of real, deep, solid learning, who may be able to combat error and support those doctrines which we believe to be taught in the divine Word.

As it may be interesting to some of our readers, we subjoin a copy of the warrant, empowering Highbury College to issue certificates to Candidates for Degrees in the University of London. The one granted to Homerton College is of course to the same effect, and expressed in almost the same words:

" VICTORIA R.

"Victoria, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, to her trusty and well-beloved the Treasurer, Trustees, Tutors, and Committee of an Institution called Highbury College, situated at Highbury, in the Parish of Islington, in the County of Middlesex, greeting. Whereas we did, by our letters patent under the Great Seal of our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, bearing date at Westminster the fifth and twenty-sixth days of December, in the first year of our reign, will, grant, declare, and constitute the persons therein named to be one Body Corporate and Politic by the name of the University of London; And whereas we did therein, amongst other things, will and ordain that all persons should be admitted as candidates for the respective degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Bachelor of Laws, or Doctor of Laws, to be confirmed by the said University, on presenting to the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, and Fellows thereof, a certificate of their having completed the requisite course of instruction from the college called University College, or from the college called King's College, or from such other Institution incorporated or unincorporated as now are or hereafter shall be established for the purposes of education, whether in the metropolis or elsewhere, within our said United Kingdom, as we, our heirs and successors, under our or their Sign Manual, shall hereafter authorize to issue such certificates; Now know ye, that we, reposing great confidence in your learning, ability, and discretion, do hereby authorize you to issue to such persons as may be desirous of becoming candidates for their respective degrees or Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Bachelor of Laws, or Doctor of Laws, to be conferred by the said University of London, certificates to the effect that such candidates have completed the course of instruction, which

the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, and Fellows of the said University of London, by regulation in that behalf shall have determined.

"Given at our Court at St. James's the eleventh day of August, 1840, in the fourth year of our reign. By her Majesty's Command.

(Signed)

"NORMANBY."

ANNIVERSARY OF AIREDALE COLLEGE, BRADFORD, YORKSHIRE.

The anniversary of this Institution was held on the 24th of June. The services commenced in the College Chapel, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon. The Rev. John Ely, of Leeds, opened the services with prayer. Very good essays, which appeared to give much satisfaction, were read by three of the senior students; by Mr. Tasker on revivals of religion; by Mr. Cooke on the present state and future prospects of the Jews; and by Mr. Scales on the inconsistency of atheists in endeavouring to propagate their sentiments. A very admirable address, and which he was afterwards unanimously requested to publish, was delivered to the students by the Rev. John Kelly, of Liverpool. The constituents of the college then adjourned to the library room of the college, when John Peele Clapham, Esq. having been called to the chair, the usual business of the Institution was transacted. In the evening an excellent and evangelical sermon was preached in the College Chapel by the Rev. A. Ewing, of Halifax.

On the preceding day the annual examination of the students was held;—the Rev. B. B. Haigh, of Tadcaster, in the chair. It commenced at an early hour in the morning and continued till late in the evening. The following is the report of the gentlemen by whom it was conducted.

"The Committee of Examination cheerfully renders the constituents of Airedale College a report of the exercises which have occupied it this day.

The following is an outline of the branches of study pursued by the students during the past year.

In Hebrew the senior class has read 32 chapters in Isaiah, collating it, the 6 first chapters excepted, with the Septuagint, the whole of the Chaldee of Ezra, and also the Gospel of Matthew, and 6 chapters of Mark in Syriac.

The second class has read, in Hebrew, from the 46th to the 78th Psalms inclusive; in Chaldee, 4 chapters in Daniel; and in Syriac 6 chapters in Matthew.

The third class has directed its attention to the first 17 chapters in Genesis.

Lectures have been given in divinity to all the students on the existence and perfections of God, connected with examinations and essays on the subjects of each, and the reading and criticism of a sermon and plan every week.

The senior class has read, in Greek, the greater part of the Nubes of Aristophanes; the 1st and 2nd Epistles to Corinthians, together with the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and the 1st and 2nd to the Thessalonians; and in Latin the first Satires of Juvenal, and the whole of Persius.

The second class has gone through, in Greek, a considerable part of the Prometheus Vincetus of Eschylus; the 1st and 2nd Epistles to Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus, Philemon and the Hebrews; and in Latin, the Andrian and "Neantotimorenmenos" of Terence.

The third class has given its attention to part of the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, and to the Epistle to the Romans, with the first Epistle of Peter, in Greek, and the Satires of Juvenal, from the 10th to the 14th inclusive, in Latin. The junior class has studied, in Greek, a portion of Xenophon's *Anabasis*, and of John's Gospel; and in Latin, the 2nd book of Virgil's *Æneid*.

In mathematics the senior class has studied the whole of the 11th book of Euclid;—the 2nd class from the 13th problem in the 3d book to the end, and the whole of the fourth book; and the 3rd class 17 problems in the 1st book. In mental philosophy Brown has been used as a class book for the senior class, and they have studied his theories of simple and relative suggestion, and other subjects connected with them, and essays have been written and submitted to

critical examination on the subjects that have come under review. The junior class has read Jamieson's Grammar of Logic, and part of Blair's Lectures. Church history has also occupied their attention. Using Mosheim as a class book, they have studied the history of the reformed and Armenian churches, and of other denominations, during the 17th and the former part of the 18th centuries. Attention has also been paid by some of the students to Algebra, and by all of them to natural philosophy.

To all these branches, excepting church history, natural philosophy, and Algebra, which were omitted for want of time, the examination has to a greater or less extent been directed, and no one who is acquainted with the usual curriculum of our academical institutions, can fail to appreciate very highly the progress of the students in the several departments of their collegiate course.—To specify any part of the examinations as peculiarly satisfactory, would be invidious, and on this occasion unnecessary. The general result is one which it affords the Committee the greatest pleasure to attest, both as it regards the care and attention of their respected tutors, and the diligence and labours of the students themselves.

Signed, B. B. HAIGH. J. MUNRO, A.M. JAS. PRIDIE.
J. G. MIAL. JOSEPH STRINGER.

The next Session will commence with 20 students.

CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX.

The seventeenth anniversary of this Congregational Society for Home Missions, was held in Brighton, on Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 22d and 23d.

On Tuesday evening there was a public service at the Tabernacle, West Street, (Rev. H. Heap's,) when the Rev. W. Davis, of Hastings, commenced the service by reading the Scriptures and prayer, and the Rev. Dr. Leifchild preached a useful and impressive sermon from Heb. vi. 11, 12.

Wednesday morning was occupied in the private deliberations of the brethren, and in the evening a public meeting was held at the Old Ship Rooms, when J. B. Brown, Esq. LL.D. of Worthing, took the chair. The Rev. James Edwards, of Brighton, read the report, and resolutions were submitted to the meeting by the Rev. Drs. Burder and Matheson, and the Rev. Messrs. Blackburn and Wells of London, Benson of Chichester, &c.

The attendance, both at the sermon and the public meeting, was greater than on preceding anniversaries; and it is hoped that the result of the deliberations will be seen in the revival of our denominational interests in the county of Sussex, which, at the present time, it must be confessed, greatly need the sympathy and co-operation of more prosperous churches.

NEW INDEPENDENT CHAPEL, BURLEY, WHARFDALE, YORKSHIRE.

On Wednesday, July 29th, a new Independent Chapel was opened at the above place, when the Rev. James Pridie, of Halifax, preached in the morning; and the Rev. John Ely, of Leeds, in the evening. The Rev. John Cooke, of Gomersall, the Rev. Richard Gibbs, of Skipton, and Mr. Richards, of Airedale College, took part in the devotional exercises.

On Lord's day, August 2nd, the Rev. J. S. Hastie, of Otley, preached; the Rev. Peter Scott, of Shipley, in the afternoon; and in the evening, the Rev. J. G. Miall, of Bradford. All the services were well attended. The total amount of collections, exclusive of £66 previously received as donations, was £338 17s., a fine illustration of the efficiency of the voluntary principle. The Chapel, which is built in the pointed Gothic style, will accommodate 400 people, and has attached to it a school, built in the Tudor style; also a large enclosure for a burial ground, the whole being estimated at £1500. The land is the gift of John Peele Clapham, Esquire, who has taken a lively interest in the cause of Christ in this neighbourhood. The whole will speedily be conveyed into the hands of trustees, representatives of the neighbouring congregations, for the

sole use and benefit of the Independent church and congregation worshipping in the above chapel, and now designated Salem Chapel. Independency was first introduced at Burley about a year since; subsequently a church has been formed, consisting of between 40 and 50 members. Altogether the spiritual prospects are pleasing.

ORDINATIONS, REMOVALS, &c.

On Thursday, 27th August, the Rev. J. B. Law was ordained to the pastoral charge of the Independent congregation at Writtle, Essex. The Rev. J. Gray of Chelmsford delivered the introductory discourse, in which, with clearness and perspicuity of arrangement, he described the nature of a gospel church. The questions were proposed by the Rev. J. E. Good of Gosport, and accompanied with many impressive observations. The Rev. C. Chapman of Greenwich offered up the ordination prayer, and the Rev. Alexander Fletcher of London delivered an affectionate and eloquent charge. The following gentlemen assisted in the services of the day—Rev. Messrs. Pilkington of Rayleigh, Thornton of Billericay, Craig of Bocking, Trew of Dedham, Beddow of Gram-pound, Marks of Chelmsford, Temple of Rochford, Wardle of Chigwell, Hayter of Ingatestone.

After the service, a large party of the members and friends of the congregation dined at the Crown Tavern, the Rev. Alexander Fletcher in the chair. During the afternoon the party was addressed by several of the ministers present; and in the evening a most impressive and appropriate sermon was preached to the people by the Rev. T. Craig of Bocking.

On Wednesday, Sept. 9, Mr. E. Morris was ordained to the pastoral office over the Independent church, Stretford, Lancashire. The Rev. R. Halley, D.D. Manchester, delivered the introductory discourse, and proposed the usual questions; the Rev. G. Rogers, Harmer Hill, Shropshire, offered the ordination prayer, with imposition of hands; the Rev. J. Gwyther, Hulme, gave the charge to the pastor. In the evening, the Rev. R. Fletcher, Manchester, preached to the people; the Rev. Dr. Clunie, Salford; J. Bramal, Patricroft; J. Anyon, Pendlebury; and J. Spencer, Ashton, assisted in the devotional parts of the exercises.

The chapel was well filled during the whole of the services, which were of a peculiarly interesting and solemn character, and it is hoped that the holy excitement produced in the minds of all present, will lead to more devoted and energetic efforts for the promotion of the cause of the Redeemer.

The Rev. Edward Leighton has resigned his charge at Ovenden, near Halifax, to become an Agent of the Home Missionary Society, and is appointed to a station at the important town of Loughborough, where a congregational interest is likely to be rescued from extinction by the united efforts of the Leicestershire Association and the Home Missionary Society.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND MINOR CORRESPONDENCE.

Favours have been received from Rev. Drs. Henderson and W. Smith. Rev. Messrs. J. B. Law—G. Bond—G. Pillgrim—J. Mather—D. E. Ford—J. S. Bright—J. Hunt—Thomas Coleman—J. Ketley—Thos. Milner—Thos. Lewis—J. Curwen—Thomas Atkin—Edward Morris—Ed. Leighton.

Also, from W. Stroud, Esq. M.D.—Messrs. J. Soul—J. Wontner—Hull Terrell—Aliquis.

The Editor regrets to postpone the insertion of some valuable Critical Notices, but the extent of interesting intelligence transmitted to him has compelled him to omit them.